

Modernism's Material Forms:
Literary Experiments in Transatlantic Print Culture, 1880-1945

by

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Introduction

Modernism's Material Forms argues that the market for print and the material conditions of textual production and circulation pushed modernist writers both to radically redefine literary genres and to refashion the material forms through which their literary experiments reached the public. I emphasize the ways in which forms of print culture—by which I mean the historically specific material objects through which texts reached readers *and* the cultural expectations adhering to particular vehicles of print and modes of textual circulation—both influenced and enabled the formal experimentation of modernist writers. Rather than anxiously shunning new print cultures and their forms, or remaining in tense opposition to them, writers like Virginia Woolf, Henry James, Jean Toomer, and T.S. Eliot used their negotiation of these forms as fertile resources for their formal experimentations. These authors understood acts of reading in modernity to be inherently material encounters and they reworked literary genres and forms of transatlantic print culture in dialogue with these ideas about reading practices and their readers' experience of their texts. I argue that modernist experimental formal practices and modes of literary production anticipate and exploit their embeddedness in specific material contexts and in a larger cultural field of reading and printing practices. By examining how modernist literary forms and the material sites of their production and dissemination shaped one another, I argue that the formal strategies of modernist texts can only be fully understood when historicized and contextualized within the circuits of print culture through which they were produced and distributed.

This project asks what print culture meant to modernist writers and publishers and explores the multiple ways in which they experimented with the cultural associations, readerly expectations, and visual landscapes offered by various vehicles of print circulation. While recent critical attention has focused on the intersections between modernism and the marketplace, these critical conversations focus intensively on content and on authors' biographical experiences with editors, agents, remuneration, and the like, while mostly neglecting to consider how market forces interact with literary forms. My work argues for a new focus on the connections between material textual production and formal techniques. I draw both on recent textual theory and on archival materials—materials that allow me to recover histories of textual production, to interpret initial publication contexts and paratextual elements, and to contextualize the house practices of publishing houses like the Hogarth Press and the Boni & Liveright Press—in order to develop my readings of the formal experimentation of modernist texts.

This dissertation argues that modernist formal experimentation was in its very essence developed in dialogue with material conditions of publication, circulation, and reading, and with the cultural associations clustered around different modes of transatlantic print culture. Thus, in one chapter I explore Henry James's play with the printed landscape offered by illustrated popular magazines and newspapers in his story "The Real Thing" and in another I consider how Woolf redefines the material form of a work of biography in her Hogarth Press edition of *Flush: A Biography*. In addition to chapters focused on modernist experiments with particular print forums, my dissertation also explores moments when modernist writers engage with ideas about print circulation and with the cultural associations offered by different aspects of print culture. In my

third chapter, my rereading of *The Waste Land* argues for Eliot's interest in the cultural legacy of nineteenth-century narrative circulation and my second chapter contextualizes Henry James's shifting uses of telegrams in his fiction as part of his career-long investment in the material forms and cultural history of telegraphic communication. Through multiple local readings that situate modernist texts within their historical contexts of production and dissemination, I argue that modernism's material forms are fundamentally experiments with and in what the modernists themselves saw as a world of print.

Recent work within the field of modernist criticism speaks to the explosion of interest in modernism's imbrication with market culture. Critical monographs like Michael Anesko's *Friction with the Market: Henry James and the Profession of Authorship* and Catherine Turner's *Marketing Modernism between the Two World Wars* have drawn attention to the complex relationship of modernist literary production and the larger literary marketplace. While Anesko's study focuses on Henry James's negotiations of authorship as a profession, Turner focuses on the advertising strategies of competing publishing houses and on the network of behind-the-scenes promoters which helped to build a market for modernist work and to provide an income for modernist writers.¹ Lawrence Rainey in his seminal *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* has advanced our understanding of the institutional histories and infrastructures that made modernism possible and producible in the literary marketplace.² Patrick Collier's *Modernism on Fleet Street* recovers the multiple ways in which modernist authors interacted with journalism and with the larger newspaper culture to think about potential audiences and publics.³ Additionally, the burgeoning field of

modernism's interaction with the marketplace is reflected in excellent collections of essays like *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace* and in *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*—collections which bring together critics working on the intersections of modernism and the marketplace from a variety of vantage points.⁴ In the wake of Andreas Huyssen's *After the Great Divide*, critics in the field have revised the study of modernism through archival work that has recovered a more accurate vision of the way in which modernism was situated historically in relation to other forms of culture and to the reading and purchasing public.⁵ The field as a whole has made great strides in complicating the ways in which we think about “high brow” vs. “middle brow” and “low brow” and has generated many different nuanced “modernisms” to account for the complex social, cultural, and historical construction of the literary movement.

The last twenty years have brought a broad reconsideration of how modernism and modernists positioned themselves with respect to popular culture, to the commodification of art, and to mass readerships and this work has provided a significant counter-narrative to the old story of a modernist movement that simply disdained or aggressively separated itself from the marketplace. Perhaps as a natural consequence of the desire to overturn older accounts of aesthetic wholes cordoned off from the marketplace, recent work on modernism has also tended to move away from analyzing modernist formal experimentation in favor of a focus on content or on the extra-textual, biographical contexts of modernist literary production. My work strives to historicize modernist literary production while also attending to form. My central argument—that modernist formal experimentation was in its very essence developed in dialogue with

material conditions of publication, circulation, and reading, and with the cultural associations clustered around different modes of transatlantic print culture—carves out a new space in the field through my attention to form and to multiple literary genres. This project contributes to the recent discussions in modernist studies listed above and aims to provide a fresh point of access to the reconsideration of modernism and the marketplace by examining the ways in which modernists developed their own formal practices and experiments with genre through their interaction with cultures of print.

My methodology fuses several interrelated but often un-integrated practices. Drawing on editorial theory and textual scholarship, I also incorporate work in visual theory and in material culture to read the visual plane of the page to gain greater purchase on the ways in which modernist authors and publishers construct genre and experiment with readerly expectations.⁶ While scholars working in editorial theory and in book history have focused, respectively, on authorial intention and the details of published editions, these fields do not often focus on how literary forms and genres are developed in dialogue with their material contexts. By harnessing the methodological tools of these fields to analyze the ways in which modernist authors formally and thematically engaged with their contexts of publication and with the cultural associations and reading practices linked with these contexts, I argue for the rereading of modernist texts as formal and material experiments in transatlantic print culture.⁷ My arguments about modernist experimentation are also animated by the field of genre theory and more specifically by work on generic codes, on readerly expectations, and on the implicit contract between reader and author that is negotiated through the reading of a given text.⁸ While my project focuses intently on literary forms and generic experimentation, I reach beyond the

old story of form becoming content in an idealistic New Critical sense. Instead, I argue that for these writers form becomes interesting as content because they understood the “form” of a text not as a closed-off domain of high art ideals and control, but rather as a messier site of negotiation between reader and author. The modernist authors and publishers that I examine recognized that “form” could encompass the physical vehicles through which texts circulated to readers; they experimented with the possibility that readers experienced not only the purely linguistic codes of the text (i.e. just the words themselves), but also the whole package of paratextual elements that surround the text (i.e. the bibliographic code including frontispieces, advertisements on the same pages of the magazine or newspaper, illustrations, typography, ornamental lettering, notes, etc). Additionally, authors and publishers recognized that different forms could and would invoke different kinds of readerly expectation. Modernists played with the expectations associated with different cultures of print and generated by the cultural legacies of different literary and extra-literary genres and media. This project does not pursue a formalism of detachment where form is held up as whole and maintained as fiercely separate from the market forces or daily life, but actually argues the opposite: that formal experimentation is generated by the modernists’ sense of their own embeddedness in a system and landscape of print culture, circulation, and cultural forms.⁹

While most of the scholarly work that examines modernism’s interaction with print culture and the literary marketplace has not directly focused on literary forms and genres, several recent studies of literature from the earlier periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries investigate the material histories of literary forms and genres. Janine Barchas’ *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* persuasively

re-conceptualize the form of the eighteenth-century novel by attending to its often forgotten parts through a rereading of the genre through its paratextual elements. Barchas explains that current available editions often omit these crucial elements and that her ““anatomically correct” study of the novel’s appearance as a printed book discloses the interpretive function of [...] a mass of neglected organs and appendages, forcing an expanded redefinition of the genre’s textual body.”¹⁰ My own work has benefited from Barchas’ approach to reading the paratextual elements of book design as having their own generic histories of development, reception, and experimentation. In *The Material Interests of the Victorian Novel*, Daniel Hack offers nuanced readings of particular novels through an exploration of the “multiple materialities” at work in each case: “rejecting both conflationary and exclusionary or rigidly hierarchical stances, [Hack’s] study seeks to keep distinct the four primary, contemporary referents of *materiality*—economic, physical, linguistic, and corporeal—while at the same time keeping them all in play, precisely in order to keep open the question of their relationships to one another.”¹¹ Hack’s negotiation of these complex and entangled understandings of “materiality” has been a useful model for how to productively keep multiple definitions of print culture—including both the very concrete material details of printed editions, newspapers, etc. *and* the less tangible, but no less relevant, historical conceptions of print media, of genre, of literary form, of circulation and of communication, operating in the wider culture inhabited by modern authors, publishers, and readers—at play in my own work. Additionally, Richard Menke’s *Telegraphic Realism* re-examines the interwoven developments in technologies for communication and in formal technologies in fiction: he “examines British fiction in the age of the Penny Post and the electric telegraph,

arguing that imaginative writing responds in crucial and defining ways to the nineteenth century's new media and the ideas they encouraged about information, communication, and language."¹² I admire the way his book "delineate[s] the deep ways in which new technologies, and the wider understandings that a culture could derive from them, register in literature's ways of imagining and representing the real" and my work strives for a similarly rich understanding of the intertwined development of cultures of print and literary experiments with form.¹³

My project is organized into chapters focusing on particularly rich interactions between modernist textual forms and their material contexts. My first chapter focuses on James's "The Real Thing," exploring how his text anticipates and plays with the illustrations and advertisements that formed the visual landscape surrounding the story in its initial publication contexts in the illustrated British periodical *Black & White Magazine* and in multiple American newspapers. At the level both of the sentence and of the plot, I argue, James engages productively with these contexts and their illustrations, their use of advertisements, and their mass circulation on both sides of the Atlantic. Chapter two addresses a broader range of James's work, tracing his employment of the telegraphic form in *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881-2), *In the Cage* (1898), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). Intervening in debates about James's relationship to the literary marketplace, I contend that he uses the telegram in these texts to experiment—both formally and thematically—with the ways in which market forces shape textual forms and the ways in which textual forms shape human relationships. This chapter shows how James's most seemingly abstract formal economies for representing power relations and communication between his characters are actually inseparably tied to his investigation of

the telegram as a resonant form of print culture. In my third chapter, I turn to poetic form, in a reading of neglected aspects of the composition and poetics of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. I argue that Eliot's poem is crucially linked to the narrative modes, the female and lower-class voices, and the readerly practices and desires associated by many modernist writers with nineteenth-century novelistic print culture. Specifically, I focus on the strange narrative interlude in the pub and on Vivien Eliot's role as collaborator to recast the production of *The Waste Land* as a process profoundly preoccupied with gender, with class, with female voices, with authorial collaboration, and with the limits of lyricism and the promises of narrative. Building on this argument about the different cultural associations, types of circulation, and experimental possibilities offered by different genres, my fourth chapter examines the ways in which Woolf exploits her position as self-publisher through the Hogarth Press to play with expectations in *Flush: A Biography*. In *Flush*, she uses verbal and visual media to redefine the genre of biography; by experimenting with elements like the frontispiece, the illustrations, the notes, and her narrative techniques, Woolf creates a complex network of gazes focused on the subject Flush and highlights the material production of *Flush*. From this reading, I move in my final chapter to consider Boni & Liveright and the Hogarth Press, contextualizing these two daring and untraditional vessels of print culture, their cultural impact, and their material interaction with modernist formal experimentation. Beginning with a reading of the two houses' different versions of *The Waste Land*, I examine a wide array of modernist productions, from the Boni & Liveright production of Jean Toomer's *Cane* and Djuna Barnes's *A Book* to the Hogarth editions of Leonard and Virginia Woolf's *Two Stories* and of Julia Margaret Cameron's *Victorian Photographs of Famous*

Men and Fair Women, showing how formal techniques and market demands intersect in the material forms produced by these two influential modernist publishing houses.

Methodologically, my work juxtaposes textual and visual evidence—drawing on archival materials including advertisements, illustrated periodicals, drafts, letters, diaries, photographs, and different editions of major works of modernist fiction and poetry—in order to analyze the material production of modern literary forms. I investigate the ways in which literary forms and genres develop in dialogue with their material contexts, combining close attention to literary forms with an archival investigation of histories of textual production stimulated by the fields of editorial theory and book history. My work is indebted to these fields and has also been inspired by the methods and questions developed by new work on visual and material cultures. The synthesis of these disparate methods is distinctly original to my work. I hope to extend and enrich recent emphases in modernist studies by rereading modernist texts as formal and material experiments in transatlantic print culture and as projects engaged with historically specific cultures of print.

¹ Michael Anesko, *Friction with the Market: Henry James and the Profession of Authorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). Catherine Turner, *Marketing Modernism Between the Two World Wars* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003). Catherine Turner argues against older understandings of the market for modernism (i.e. that there wasn't one), to assert that: "[i]n fact, between the two world wars, advertisements for modern literature taught consumers in the United States that modernism, like many other new products of the time, was good for them as long as they used it correctly" (3). She wants to see modernism as "an integrative mode": a critical move she asserts "not only makes clear the styles that are involved, but also describes the place that moderns occupied within their culture. In the past, critics have focused on the modernists as rejecters—turning away from a Victorian culture that they found stuffy and smug and from a consumer culture that they found bland and inauthentic. However, rather than seeming modernism as an outright rejection of these different types of culture, defining the modern project as "integrative" implies that modernists had a different relationship to some of the key dualisms that they inherited from their past. In particular, within American culture, modernists integrated many of the divisions that Victorians had made between commercial and quality, sacred and secular, and high and low in the arts" (6). I admire her book and its focus on the advertisements placed in a range of periodicals advertising modernist books to American readers and her study of five different presses to show the range of approaches both across the marketplace and over time.

² Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). Ultimately, I find Rainey's work to be a useful resource for understanding the detailed ins and outs of modernist publishing and payments and patronage, but I think that we should use this sort of information to produce readings of the texts at hand and not simply to gain a picture of cultural transactions or biographical "careers" (as he ends his epilogue with the opposed careers of Pound and H.D.). I want to know how this book would look if it actually worked with the texts themselves more directly and analyzed how these complex fields of exchange were reflected and thought through in the works themselves. I am interested in the ways in which modernists themselves were invested in the material forms of print as vehicles for experimentation and exploration—like telegrams or thinking through legacies of 19th century novelistic print culture or frontispieces—rather than, as Rainey would contend, thinking through ways to commodify and package their high brow or high modernist aesthetic. Rainey claims that each of his chapters "reconsiders an event that has become the subject of a familiar, generally hagiographic narrative, and each explicitly offers a counternarrative that rewrites our received accounts" (8). He seeks to dethrone the saints of modernism by uncovering their dirty ties with the marketplace and the seemingly arbitrary manufacturing of aesthetic value—i.e. that the Dial prize was brokered for T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" by people who hadn't even read or seen the poem. In contrast, I want to recover the ways in which modernists themselves were playing with the marketplace and with its material forms of print culture and print circulation.

³ Patrick Collier, *Modernism on Fleet Street* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006). Collier argues that modernist anxiety over journalism was motivated by their concerns about audiences for their own work: “For beneath all of this anxiety about journalism lay the great question of the public—its wayward and unpredictable ways, the opportunities and threats it posed—and virtually all modernist discussions of journalism are (more or less explicit) approaches to this question. The issue of mass journalism offered these writers an arena, an existing field of discussion with ready terms and arguments, in which they could work out their questions and anxieties about the public, democracy, and the arts, and the individual writer’s or artist’s potential influence on them” (6).

⁴ *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, edited by Ian Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren Chernaik (Hampshire, UK: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996). *Henry James’s New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*, edited by David McWhirter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁵ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986).

⁶ Sara Blair’s *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) has provided a particularly salient and useful model of literary scholarship which examines the intersections between literary texts and visual cultures and visual objects.

⁷ My work is indebted to works in the field of textual theory and particularly to George Bornstein’s *Material Modernism: The Politics of the Page* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Jerome McGann’s *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993). This project builds on these works in its drive to recover the publication contexts and histories of modernist texts and to rethink the ways in which we understand the material pages of modernism and the social and financial institutions that enabled and surrounded modernist literary work.

⁸ Fredric Jameson’s theorization of genre in *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981) has been particularly enriching for my own understanding of the continual renegotiation of generic categories: “Genres are essentially literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact” (106). June Howard’s work on genre has also been very instrumental in my own understandings of genre; in her introduction to *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985) Howard argues for a more fluid understanding of the construction of genre: “I assume that genres are not static entities or even stable structures but distinctive concatenations of aesthetic imperatives and formal choices that weave, dynamically and unevenly, through literary texts; I will examine the heterogeneous conventions and narrative strategies—

melodramatic, sentimental, documentary—to be found in naturalist novels. An understanding of the traces of other genres embedded in these works is indispensable to understanding them, for naturalism is strongly marked by such internal difference” (x).

⁹ I see my interests in recovering the development of modernist formal experimentation and the cultures of print through which it circulated as striving for the historical rigor as well as the intellectually expansive arguments about literature and culture exemplified in the model of June Howard’s *Publishing the Family* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Janine Barchas, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 6. Barchas echoes my reading methodology—closely analyzing the historical development of print culture, genre, and readerly expectations—in her assessment of Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*: “Sterne uses both graphic design and paratexts to test the boundaries of the emerging genre [of the novel], rearranging the conventional ingredients of an eighteenth-century book to challenge readerly expectation [...] By the time that Sterne writes, the novel’s reliance upon formal structures, including graphic design, is firmly enough established to be manipulated to comic effect, allowing a satire of form to become a bestseller” (15-16). I am interested in Barchas’s blending of a more panoramic view of each element of book design with persuasive local readings of individual cases; in her chapter focusing on frontispieces in the 18th-Century novel, she interprets the broader frontispiece tradition and highlights individual instances and how they inform her local readings of individual novels. However, I do think that her broad view would not be possible—or desirable—for my own project, as unlike in the case of the 18th-Century novel as a book-genre for which Barchas convincingly delineates a predictable set of conventions, in modernism and particularly in my work across traditional generic divides—i.e. books of poetry, biography, novels, etc.—there is too much variation for that sort of schematic reading across texts and specific contexts to work for me. Although I find her book compelling as a model, I found that the close examination of individual experiments with print culture to be most useful and interesting in my own work.

¹¹ Daniel Hack, *The Material Interests of the Victorian Novel* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 1-2. Hack brings together a range of resources and materials that I find compelling as a model of scholarship: “To identify and illuminate such moments, the following chapters bring together a range of topics and materials typically treated separately or not at all by literary scholars, including typeface and advertisements bound with novel tests; theories of labor and international trade, arrangements for funding literary production, and begging letters; puns, orthography, and the referential claims of fiction; and the writing, speaking, desiring, suffering—even spontaneously combusting—human body” (7).

¹² Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 3.

¹³ Menke, 3-4.

Chapter 1

“The Real Thing” Framed between Advertisements and Illustrations: Henry James Experiments with Landscapes of Print Culture in Transatlantic Periodicals

Introduction:

At the turn of the twentieth century, Henry James was ideally positioned to negotiate and to reflect upon cultures of print through which he disseminated his works. As an American citizen through his birth and as a resident in England, James was able to exploit his situation to effectively maximize his advantages—both in terms of marketing his texts in multiple forms on both sides of the Atlantic and in terms of experimenting with the multiple landscapes of print culture available to him.¹ I refer to the various material formats through which James published his work as “landscapes” because the word evokes the sense of a constructed view that is not natural, but man-made—a framed perspective designed to emphasize a particular viewpoint, to serve particular generic purposes, and to meet specific expectations for different audiences. I read James’s career long experimentation with different formats for circulating his texts as indicative of his enduring interest in the ways in which new fields of vision and publishing context could interact with his artistic experimentations. In the final decade of the nineteenth century, as James was beginning to develop a style more akin to later modernist fiction and less

similar to the realist narratives of his early career, James began to explore the new venue of theatre and also focused on producing shorter narratives that he usually published first in magazines and newspapers. As James wrote and published his story “The Real Thing” in 1892, he was poised at a transitional moment in his literary development and he used his vantage point to access and to assess both American and British cultures of print. James’s production of this story is an important moment for my larger argument; his transition into a style that would come to shape a modernist aesthetic was intimately related to his increasing investigation of how different material forms of textuality and circulation shape reading in modernity.² In other words, I argue that for James this story functioned precisely as a literary experiment in transatlantic print culture. Rather than expressing an anxiety about the masses of readers who would read his story through its popular periodical sites of publication—in the illustrated periodical *Black & White Magazine* and in multiple American newspapers—James constructed the form and content of his story to play with the material form of its publishing contexts. The story—thematically and formally—experiments with its embeddedness within the landscape of transatlantic print culture.

“The Real Thing” was first published during the month of April in 1892 in *Black and White* magazine and in multiple American newspapers. It tells the story of a frustrated illustrator and his strangely memorable encounter with an aristocratic married couple, the Monarchs, who have fallen on hard times and who come to seek employment as artist’s models. The story begins with an account of the artist-narrator’s first impressions of the couple and narrates his developing knowledge of them and his attempts to make use of them in his illustrations. Ultimately, the Monarchs prove

unillustratable—they distort the narrator’s medium as they continually come out looking too tall and too much like themselves in each image—and the artist-narrator pays them to “go away.”³ The story ends with the artist-narrator’s claim that although the encounter may have done his art “a permanent harm” he is “content to have paid the price—for the memory.”⁴ In the story, James takes illustration—and its costs and benefits—as his theme and as a key foil for his formal maneuverings. By looking at the periodical contexts for this story, we can appreciate how James used his experiences of “friction with the market” not only to line his pocketbook (as Michael Anesko has persuasively argued), but also to shape both the form and content of his narrative experiments.⁵ In this chapter, I argue that James’s formal technique in “The Real Thing” was developed as a strategy in anticipation of the initial publication contexts of the story—the material forms of the illustrated weekly magazine and illustrated newspapers. At the level of the sentence and at the level of plot, James engages productively with these contexts and their illustrations, their use of advertisements, and their mass circulation on both sides of the Atlantic. James experiments with multiple aspects of the landscape of print within which this story was circulated—the story plays with its own embeddedness on sheets full of illustrations, advertisements, scraps of news, reviews, cartoons, and reflects upon its status as part of a broader visual terrain constructed on the pages of illustrated periodicals and newspapers.

By providing a more thorough discussion of the ways in which James’s formal experimentation interacts with the market, my chapter contributes a new focus on form to the scholarly conversation surrounding James’s experiences in and manipulations of the literary marketplace. My argument intervenes in the lively debate that has sprung up in

the wake of Michael Anesko's compelling archival project in *Friction with the Market* and in response to the excellent work on the New York Edition exemplified by David McWhirter's edited volume, *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*.⁶ As Anesko points out in his preface, critics have often uncritically accepted the self-portrait of the artist presented in James's prefaces—as secluded from and disdainful of the market—in their aligning of James's “great and often difficult works” with ““art” rather than “the world.””⁷ While Anesko's seminal work has greatly contributed to an increase of work on a more “worldly” James and his interactions with the marketplace, almost all of these works neglect to carefully consider the formal elements and techniques in James's texts and instead concentrate intensively on his biographical and content-based links with the market.

My reading of “The Real Thing” builds on the work of Charles Johanningsmeier, Anne Margolis, and Marcia Jacobson to consider James's interaction with newspaper and magazine publics and formats and both sides of the Atlantic, but unlike their projects my argument focuses on the ways in which James responds *formally* to his interactions with these markets, publishing formats, and readerships.⁸ As Anesko and others have noted, James's “status as a transatlantic author gave him a peculiar and prophetic insight into the evolution of an Anglo-American market for literary work, and he actively pressed this advantage in his dealings with publishers in both countries”⁹ and my chapter explores the ways in which James used his special position to experiment with his evolving literary form and with forms of transatlantic print culture. As Anesko and others have documented, Henry James enjoyed a privileged position through living in England while still an American citizen as he was able to enjoy the protection of both countries’

copyright laws before the International copyright act of 1891 extended such protection to all authors selling their wares on the transatlantic print culture market. James only suffered piracy in volume form twice and as Anesko notes, he “promptly learned from his mistakes to safeguard his interests in both countries by timing his publications carefully and registering pre-publication copyright editions of his work with the Library of Congress when material that was to appear first in England anticipated the American issue by more than a few weeks” (36).¹⁰ James was especially savvy about marketing his work to periodical venues and he often would play American magazines off against one another to get the best price for his work.¹¹ In this chapter, I focus on the synchronic periodical publications of James’s story “The Real Thing” in order to consider how James used his special vantage point onto the transatlantic landscape of print culture to experiment with negotiating those contexts—filled with illustrations and advertisements—through the form and content of his story.

Illustrative Claims

James develops the theme and form of “The Real Thing” in anticipation of and in dialogue with the context of its material production and circulation through an illustrated magazine and various newspapers.¹² Throughout his career, Henry James often encountered the common practice of publishing texts alongside images and illustrations when his texts circulated in magazine and newspapers.¹³ These vessels of print culture continually experimented with and expanded upon their inclusion of new visual media and “Illustrated” weeklies gained increased currency in the popular market during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wishing to appeal to a wider swath of readers,

James was eager at times to market his work to readers who were attracted by visual accompaniments to literary texts and thus was willing to engage with these popular publishing formats and to accommodate illustrations in his literary productions.¹⁴

Although he had allowed earlier work to circulate in popular illustrated media, James acknowledges the potential competitive threat from visual illustrations in his 1909 preface to the New York Edition of *The Golden Bowl*. In this well-known preface, James discusses “the question of the general acceptability of illustration” as a relevant issue for:

... the author of any text putting forward illustrative claims (that is producing an effect of illustration) by its own intrinsic virtue and so finding itself elbowed, on that ground, by another and a competitive process. The essence of any representational work is of course to bristle with immediate images; and I, for one, should have looked much askance at the proposal, on the part of my associates in the whole business, to graft or “grow,” at whatever point, a picture by another hand on my own picture – this being always, to my sense, a lawless incident.¹⁵

Here James expresses his sense of the inherent conflict between verbal and visual media attempting to perform the same “illustrative” labor. He describes the competition with multiple overlaid metaphors: the processes are “elbowing” each other, the work “bristles” with images, the visual image becomes “grafted” upon the textual “picture,” and the act of grafting is a “lawless incident.” J. Hillis Miller interprets James’s remarks about illustration in *The Golden Bowl* Preface as expressing his anxiety about the dueling representational labors of text and image: “As James’s gingerly comments indicated, he knew he was playing with fire, the fire of a possible excess of visual image over text, a ‘competition’ of the one with the other.”¹⁶ Yet James’s proliferating imagery to describe the pitched battle seems to flaunt its literariness and metaphoricity with playfulness and even exuberance. While claiming to fear the triumph of the visual over the verbal, James emphasizes the ability of words on the page to call up multiple images at the same time

and to exceed static, illustrative visual media in their ability to “bristle” with overlaid images.

James couches his comments on the problems and possibilities for illustrating his texts in terms of his fear that literature is a dying art. He expresses his concern that the modes which “prose” uses to conjure pictures are fast becoming obsolete in a culture where other ways of producing images are quickly gaining dominance: “Anything that relieves responsible prose of the duty of being, while placed before us, good enough, interesting enough and, if the question be of picture, pictorial enough, above all *in itself*, does it the worst of services, and may well inspire in the lover of literature certain lively questions as to the future of that institution.”¹⁷ James warns about the problems of supplementing the picturing abilities of prose with “anything” that “relieves” writing of being sufficient in itself; this warning seems to refer to the growing trend in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to package literature with visual adornments to make it more palatable and saleable on the mass market.¹⁸ James’s prefatory comments reflect his experiences in a literary marketplace in which the “future” of unadorned literary texts was constantly threatened by more popular modes of “picturing.”

Yet even while James’s comments suggest his anticipation of a probable victory of the visual over the verbal arts, his style seems to assert the contrary: his play with language and imagery in his discussion of the competitive media asserts the special abilities of the verbal and the literary as offering something different from the threatening visual media. Indeed, the literary flourishes of his prose seem to demonstrate and perhaps defend the very unique powers and province of the written word and specifically of the late Jamesian sentence. By 1909, despite his feigned anxiety about the passing of

literature, James had developed a literary style that self-consciously and effectively performs the very qualities that competing visual media lack. James developed his style knowing it would have to compete with and circulate alongside visual media and illustrations and thus he makes use of the elements of writing that exceed the capacity of static visual media: he invokes complex, overlapping and recursive temporalities, he layers multiple images through an intensified use of metaphor, and he exploits the ambiguity of his language. James crafts a literary technique that flaunts its un-illustratability.

Reading “The Real Thing” in *Black and White*

To develop my reading of James’s formal technique of un-illustratability as an experiment with print culture, I will first focus on the version of “The Real Thing” appearing in the April 16, 1892 issue *Black and White* magazine, “a weekly illustrated record and review,” with three illustrations drawn by Rudolph Blind. As Charles Johanningsmeier explains, “*Black and White* was one of what Reginald Tye has called “the illustrated folios, physical giants—neither review, magazine, nor newspaper” (19)—that dominated the British marketplace in the 1880s and 1890s. Like its counterparts the *Illustrated London News* and *Graphic*, it was low-priced (six pence) and intended to appeal to the working- and middle-class mass audience with copious illustrations; as a result, its circulation in 1892 was probably about 300,000.”¹⁹ By closely analyzing this early published version of the story within its material context of publication, I explore how James’s stylistic maneuverings can be productively re-contextualized in *Black and White*, a context that shapes both the thematic content and the stylistic experimentation of

James's story. Reading the story in its 1892 publication context in *Black and White* dramatizes the story's competition with visual media – the text competes with its own illustrations and with the abundance of surrounding images from other sketches and cartoons, from the ornate headings, and from the plethora of eye-catching advertisements. As critic Adam Sonstegard has persuasively argued, *Black and White* “seems indeed to have emphasized visual over verbal art. [...] It competed for readers with *The Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic* [...] these magazines depended upon attractive illustrations for their continued publication and sometimes gave graphic artists higher billing than they gave to writers.”²⁰ Indeed, as Sonstegard notes, the illustrations often occupied more space on the page than James's prose and the illustrator Rudolph blind gets almost equal billing with the eminent Henry James—even though by 1892 he was already an internationally famous writer.

In the April 16, 1892 issue of *Black and White*, “The Real Thing” appears with three full illustrations (and an ornamental first letter) and while Blind's drawings dominate the center of the folio-sized pages, James's prose becomes squeezed into a narrow border surrounding the images. Visually, the text – with justified margins on both sides of the columns – could be read as a blocked-out frame for Blind's illustrations (see Figure 1.1 for an example of this visual framing). However, the context of *Black and White* does not simply give all of the power to the pictures; instead its pages tell the more complex story of the competition and cooperation between the verbal and visual media at play in and around James's story. The spatial primacy of the visual over the verbal is counteracted by the captioning of illustrations with lines from the story; these captions render the images literal, explanatory. The material pages of *Black and White*

prominently display the contest between text and image as well as the battle between high and low culture; the magazine is filled with advertisements for a variety of consumers and popular sketches printed right along-side James's high literary story.²¹ James's story responds to the competition for the attention of readers/viewers by flaunting its literariness and its relative inaccessibility to the undiscerning reader/eye.

"And then I suppose you know that you'll get awfully tired!"
 "Oh, we won't get tired!" they eagerly cried.
 "Have you had any kind of practice?"
 They hesitated—they looked at each other. "We've been photographed, (casually," said Mrs. Monarch.
 "She means the fellows have faded us," added the Major.
 "I am—because you're so good-looking."
 "I don't know what they thought, but they were always after us."
 "We always get our photographs for nothing," smiled Mrs. Monarch.
 "We might have brought some for you, my dear," her husband remarked.
 "I'm not sure we have any left. We've given quantities away," she explained to me.
 "With our autographs and that sort of thing," said the Major.
 "Are they to be got in the shops?" I inquired, as a hopeless phony.
 "Oh, yes; how—they used to be."
 "Not now," said Mrs. Monarch, with her eyes on the floor.

I could fancy the "sort of thing" they put on the presentation copies of their photographs, and I was sure they were a beautiful band. It was odd to be quick to be sure of everything that concerned them. If they were now to pass as to have to wear shillings and pence, they never had had much of a margin. Their good looks had been their capital, and they had good-humouredly made the most of the career that this source worked out for them. It was in their faces, the blankness, the deep insouciant curves of the twenty years of country-house visiting which had given them pleasant intonation. I could see the sunny drawing-rooms, sprinkled with periodicals she didn't read, to which Mrs. Monarch had continually sat; I could see the sea-shrubberies in which she had walked, equipped to admiration for either exercise. I could see the rich covers the Major had helped to shoot, and the wonderful garments in which, late at night, he revolved to the smoking-room to talk about them. I could imagine their haggard and waterproof tweeds and rugs, their roll of sticks and cases of tackle and tent umbrellas; and I could evoke the exact appearance of their two persons and the compact variety of their luggage on the platforms of country stations.

They gave small tips, but they were liked; they didn't do anything themselves, but they were welcome. They looked so well everywhere; they gained the general relief for stature, complexion and "form." They knew it without being or vulgarly, and they respected themselves in consequence. They were not superficial; they went through and kept themselves up—it had been their line. Respectable people had to have some line. I could feel how, even in a dull house, they could have been counted upon for cheerfulness. At present something had happened—it didn't matter what, their little income had grown less, it had grown less—and they had to do something for posterity. Their friends liked them, but didn't like to support them. There was something about them that represented credit—chair clothes, their manners, their type; but if credit is a large empty pocket in which an occasional thank reverberates, the chair at least must be audible. What they wanted of me was to help to make it so. Fortunately they had no children—I soon discovered that. They would also perhaps wish our relations to be kept secret: this was why it was "for the future"—the reproduction of the five would betray them.

I liked them—they were so simple; and talked no objections to them if they would wait. But, somehow, with all their perceptions I didn't easily believe in them. After all, they were amateurs, and the ruling passion of my life was the detection of the amateur. Combined with this was another perversity—an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one. The defect of the real one was to get up by a lack of representation. I liked things that appeared; then one was sure. Whether they were or not was a subordinate, and almost always a consequent, question. These were

other considerations, the first of which was that I already had two or three people to see, notably a young person with big feet, is shyness from Killburn, who, for a couple of years, had come to me regularly for my illustrations, and with whom I was still—perhaps ignominiously—satisfied. I frankly explained to my visitors how the case stood; but they had taken more precautions than I supposed. They had consumed on their opportunity, for Charles Rivers had told them of the projected dinner at least of one of the winners of our day—the rarest of the novelists—who, long neglected by the multitudinous vulgar and dearly prized by the attentive (second I mention Philip Vincent), had had the happy fortune of seeing, but in life, the dawn and then the full light of a higher criticism—an estimate in which, on the part of the public, there was something really of opinion. The dinner in question, planned by a publisher of taste, was practically an act of high reparation; the wood-ens with which it was to be enriched were the heritage of English art to one of the most independent representatives of English letters. Major and Mrs. Monarch confessed to me that they had hoped I might be able to work these into my share of the enterprise. They knew I was to do the first of the books, "Rethard Ramsay," but I had to make clear to them that my participation in the rest of the affair—this first book was to be a test—was to depend on the satisfaction I should give. If this should be limited my employers would drop me without a tremor. It was therefore a crisis for me, and naturally I was making special preparations, looking about for new people, if they should be necessary, and securing the best types. I admitted, however, that I should like to work down to two or three good models



"MRS. MONARCH WENT THROUGH HER PAPER REVIEWS AND, AND DID IT QUITE WELL."

who could do for everything.
 "Should we have them to—
 a—put on special clothes?" Mrs. Monarch timidly demanded.
 "Dear, yes—that's half the business."
 "And should we be expected to supply our own costumes?"
 "Oh, no; I've got a lot of things. A painter's models put on—no put all—anything he likes?"
 "And do you mean—a—the same?"
 "The same?" Mrs. Monarch looked at her husband again.
 "Oh, she was just wondering," he explained, "if the costumes are in general use." I had no doubts that they were, and I mentioned further that some of them (I had a lot of genuine, greasy last-century things), had served their time, a hundred years ago, on living, world-worn men and women.
 "We'll put on anything that fits," said the Major.
 "Oh, I arrange that—they fit in the pictures."
 "I'm afraid I should do better for the modern books. I could come as you like," said Mrs. Monarch.
 "She has got a lot of clothes at home; they might do for contemporary life," her husband continued.
 "Oh, I can fancy women in which you'd be quite at home." And indeed I could see the slightest rearrangements of stole propriety—the stories I used to produce pictures for without the exasperation of reading them—whose sandy traits the good lady might help to people. But I had to return to the fact that for this sort of work—the daily mechanical grind—I was already equipped; the people I was working with were quite adequate.
 "We only thought we might be more like new characters," said Mrs. Monarch mildly, getting up.
 Her husband also rose; he stood looking at me with a dim smile that was thickening in so fine a man. "Wouldn't it be rather a pull sometimes to have—a—to have—" He hung fire; he wanted me to help him by phrasing what he meant. But I couldn't—I didn't know. So he brought it out, awkwardly; "The real thing; a gentleman, you know, or a lady." I was quite ready to give a general assent—I admitted that there was a great deal in that. This encouraged Major Monarch to say, following up his appeal with an unacted gasp; "It's awfully hard—we've tried everything." The gasp was commensurate; it proved too much for his wife. Before I knew it Mrs. Monarch had dropped again upon a divan and burst into tears. Her husband sat down beside her, holding one of her hands; whenever she quickly dried her eyes with the other, while I felt embarrassed as she looked up at me. "There isn't a confounded job I haven't applied for—written

Figure 1.1: James's text as frame for Blind's Illustration

While not necessarily responding to the specifics of *Black and White*,²² James was very much aware of the material conditions of magazine publication. His stylistic

emphasis on the temporal dimensions of literature—from the level of plot down to the level of the sentence—carves out an autonomous space for literary representation. James’s heavy use of metaphor in the story works as a uniquely literary and verbal mode of representation. Metaphor functions through the layering of multiple temporalities: two images are transposed, a description via a memory of another description. Metaphor functions in the service of memory: it calls upon two memories of the narrator and also solicits the response of the memory of the reader. Additionally, James’s story employs temporal disjunction and narrative deferral to force the reader to actively collaborate in creating the meaning of the text. Unlike Blind’s literal illustrations and the advertising images filling the page of *Black and White*, James’s text will not allow for passive viewing or reading; nearly every sentence demands active construction on the part of the reader.²³

James’s interest in the material conditions for literary production and his formal strategies to maximize the uniquely verbal qualities of his prose are evident in the first sentence of “The Real Thing”: “When the porter’s wife (she used to answer the house-bell) announced, ‘A gentleman—with a lady, sir,’ I had, as I often had in those days, for the wish was father to the thought, an immediate vision of sitters.”²⁴ This first sentence ushers in a mood of temporal and narrative uncertainty: the moment of the story’s telling, in which the porter’s wife presumably no longer answers the house bell and in which the narrator’s “I” has gained perspective on his past mental processes, interrupts the narration of the past event. This uncertainty mediates (and perhaps dilutes or confuses) the reader’s experience of the temporal urgency (felt in the “When” and in the porter’s wife’s quoted announcement) of the past encounter being narrated.

Interestingly, this sense of temporal disorientation and distancing from the moment of the story's actions is intensified on the pages of *Black and White*, on which the first letter of the story – the “W” of the When – gets aggrandized and separated out in an ornate illustration (see Figure 1.2). The outer ring seems to be comprised of a garland of roses, yet the shapes are strangely insect-like, as though danger lurks among the flowers.²⁵ Significantly, the shape seems to resemble a Victorian doorknocker,²⁶ which gestures toward the opening of the story and the entry of strangers (although they ring the house bell). The effect of the visual separation of the W into the space of the illustration immediately foregrounds the conflict between verbal and visual modes of representation. The W becomes enmeshed in a visual system and disjointed from its narrative purpose of creating a sense of presentness in the enunciatory “When.” Instead, the word stutters and becomes momentarily fractured—both visually and temporally—for the reader.²⁷

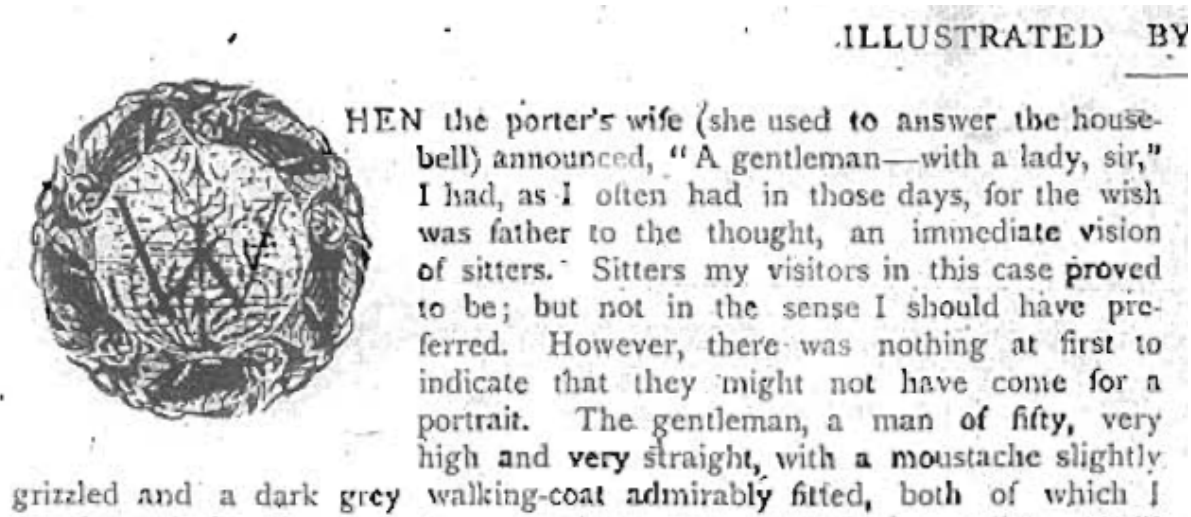


Figure 1.2: Close-up view of ornamental first letter

The end of the first sentence, the reactive event that the “When” grammatically points to, creates a tension between the idea of a past reaction and the relatively unstable present of the story's narration, the moment when the narrator analyzes the predictable

patterns in his previous thoughts: “I had, as I often had in those days, for the wish was father to the thought, an immediate vision of sitters.”²⁸ Here the reader’s sense of temporal instability heightens the strangeness of the paternal metaphor of wishes fathering thoughts, which finally produces “an immediate vision.” After all the syntactical twisting and disorienting narrative moves, the result of the sentence is a “vision.” Yet the specificity of what this vision would have looked like remains opaque for the reader. The word “sitters” (coupled with the previous class signifiers “gentleman” and “lady”) potentially conjures up the world of the portrait studio and hints at the narrator’s profession. Yet what sort of sitters? The word could be pointing toward the world of the photographic studio or to the realm of the painter or of the pen-and-ink illustrator. Thus, in his opening sentence, James inculcates a mood of temporal and referential instability, introduces the reader to a narrative filled with strange metaphors and opaque images, and both announces and experiments with the conjunction of his prose and its visual accompaniments.

The next sentence further develops James’s formal play with overlaid temporal effects and his thematic play with interpreting the visual: “Sitters my visitors in this case proved to be; but not in the sense I should have preferred.”²⁹ The narrator here flaunts his power to withhold information and advertises his ability to create confusion, suspense, and speculation. James’s narrator and his prose foreground the temporal capacities of narrative, the capacity of verbal art to play with time-effects to create meaning. This capability is not quite matched in the visual arts of the still images and illustrations accompanying the text, which can only portray a static scene that hints to a

before and an after, while James's narrative overlays the present and the past at once, creating a medley of temporal effects and affects.

Amidst the dynamic blurring of temporalities in the opening sentence, James develops the problem of verbally "illustrating" the visual spectacle of the appearance of the imagined "sitters." We are first introduced to the visitors through their titles as "gentleman" and "lady," then we are given the narrator's "vision of sitters," then we are told of their failure to live up to the narrator's expectations, a failure which is unmarked by any immediately visible shortcomings. The narrator introduces "the gentleman" to the reader through a description of his parts, the narrator's singling out of his notable attributes is reminiscent of a humorous blazon: "The gentleman, a man of fifty, very high and very straight, with a moustache slightly grizzled and a dark grey walking-coat admirably fitted, both of which I noted professionally—I don't mean as either a barber or a tailor—would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities often were striking."³⁰ Here the narrator offers only a minimalist sketch of the gentleman's height, figure, moustache and coat; he introduces to the gentleman through a catalogue of his parts—most of which are largely extrinsic to himself and more indicative of his sense of fashion than his inner nature. What did his face look like? Why are we given only these token signifiers of the well-dressed gentleman with upright carriage? The sentence seems to advertise the insufficiency of these limited visual markers to communicate anything very substantial about the gentleman's character. They can merely sketch out a potentially picturesque type, but not reflect the movements of the man's soul or the complexities of his experiences or psychology.

The temporal effects of this revelatory sentence also emphasize the vagueness and inadequacy of these visual markers; the list of physical traits is followed by an interruptive aside about “both” the grizzled moustache and the “admirably fitted” coat as inspiring “professional” interest. The sentence then proceeds with “—would have struck me as a celebrity if celebrities often were striking.” Here, the reader is almost forced to reread the sentence to find the appropriate referent for the phrase “would have struck” which has been spatially and temporally distanced by the two asides. Presumably, it is the gentleman himself (the whole and not simply the parts) that would strike the narrator as resembling a “celebrity.” For this referent, the reader has to trace back to the very opening of the sentence, accentuating the temporality of a reading-process which must be a labor-intensive and active unraveling of the multiple temporalities, the grammatical twistings, and the deferrals of the asides. The comparison between the gentleman and a celebrity is distanced and made strange by the odd temporal logic of the sentence and the conditional tense of the construction “would have struck me ... if celebrities often were striking.” This use of the conditional appears to reflect the sense of a possibility that has not occurred, in other words, the narrator implies that as celebrities are *not* often “striking” the gentleman does *not* really “strike” him as a celebrity. The narrator defines through negation – the reader learns that the gentleman *is* striking, precisely because celebrities are *not*. In essence, James develops the gentleman’s appearance through a failed metaphor, a false comparison that does not hold but that still communicates in its negative way. The play of “striking” that doubles back on “struck” and also refers to the impressive figure of the gentleman emphasizes the temporality of the sentence as it

moves through time. This sentence enacts a recursive temporality, insistently looking back and doubling back on itself to create meaning.

When the narrator goes on to dwell on the “lady’s” appearance, he continues to rely on metaphor in describing her smile as a “dim smile which had the effect of a moist sponge passed over a ‘sunk’ piece of painting, as well as of a vague allusion to vanished beauty.”³¹ In this description, James’s artist-narrator conjures up multiple temporal reference-points for the reader—the moment at which the sponge would pass over the canvas to revive the “sunk” portion, the moments before and after that pass, the present time of “vanished beauty,” and the implied past before the beauty had vanished. All of these competing moments refract the visual specifics of the description; it becomes almost impossible to picture all of those images at the same time and thus James’s prose takes a visual metaphor (i.e. that of the painter’s sponge) completely estranges it from any clear picturing function. Instead of illustrating a clear vision of Mrs. Monarch, the passage flaunts its ability to empty the pictorial elements from the visual metaphor and replaces a clear picture with a jumble of multiple temporalities. The sense of the passage isn’t what Mrs. Monarch looks like or what she ever looked like – but instead the sense of her changing appearance over time and the pathos of her lost beauty which hints at a nostalgia for a preferable past.

James’s narrator goes on to verbally “sketch” the lady’s portrait and his project of “illustrating” Mrs. Monarch in this passage is emphasized through the use of multiple metaphors, description through negation, and multiple temporalities:

She was as tall and straight, in her degree, as her companion, and with ten years less to carry. She looked as sad as a woman could look whose face was not charged with expression; that is, her tinted oval mask showed friction, as an exposed surface shows it. The hand of time had played over her freely, but only to simplify. She was slim and stiff, and so well-dressed,

in dark blue cloth, with lappets and pockets and buttons, that it was clear she employed the same tailor as her husband.³²

The narrator's mode of description is to complicate (rather than "simplify") his initial comparisons of her smile to a sponge and to a vague allusion. He continues to add to layers of metaphors and negated comparisons to his description of Mrs. Monarch and portrays her as looking "as sad as a woman could look whose face was not charged with expression." He modifies this rather elliptical phrase by adding, "that is, her tinted oval mask showed friction, as an exposed surface shows it." Here, Mrs. Monarch's face becomes more forcibly likened to a represented image, perhaps a framed miniature portrait or a framed photographic image ("oval" and "tinted" seem to point in that direction). Her "look" of sadness is defined by what it is *not* ("charged with expression") and her face becomes estranged from her humanity and takes on the character both of a represented image and of an inanimate surface. While Mr. Monarch has been reduced to his parts, Mrs. Monarch becomes de-humanized through metaphor, as she is likened to a "mask" and an "exposed surface." Like Mr. Monarch, she is also accessorized by a wealth of adornments, "with lappets and pockets and buttons." In his description of "the lady," the narrator struggles to represent the experience of "taking her in" and his "picture" takes on the qualities of a monstrous image – a composite of an inhuman, abraded mask and an assortment of odd bits of clothing. Through this description, the reader does not get a clear portrait of the physical qualities of the couple—the text offers nothing akin to a photographic reproduction or even a more conventional drawn illustration. Instead, the narrator employs metaphor, overlaid temporalities, and ambiguity to represent the affective experience of his initial encounter with the Monarchs. James's mobilization of the written word's ability to manipulate temporality

through metaphor and deferral emphasizes the special capacities of narrative. In other words, James foregrounds the time effects and the readerly disorientation that they can cause in part because these are precisely the failings or lacks of visual media competing for attention on the pages of *Black and White*.

The narrator expresses his initial visual “sketches” of the Monarchs by calling up multiple impressions made at different times. In other words, the reader’s introduction to the narrator’s first impressions of the Monarchs is always filtered through the narrator’s overlaid references to his later acts of revising his initial readings of the couple.

Paradoxically, the narrator seems to want to emphasize both his erroneous impressions (i.e. that they were wealthy sitters) and his ability to immediately and accurately “see” them. The narrator relates the odd introductory dialogue between himself and the Monarchs to emphasize the sense of the difficulty in “reading” them out of context; because the Monarchs’ appearance suggests wealth that they do not possess, the artist narrator initially misunderstands their wish to “make it pay” as payment to himself for their portraits, when really they want to be paid for their modeling efforts. Just after the narrator reveals the true reason for the Monarchs’ visit (i.e. to ask for employment as models), he discloses the practical and financial details of his own professional labor:

I worked in black and white, for magazines, for story-books, for sketches of contemporary life, and consequently had frequent employment for models. These things were true, but it was not less true that (I may confess it now—whether because the aspiration was to lead to everything or to nothing I leave the reader to guess) I couldn’t get the honours, to say nothing of the emoluments of a great painter of portraits out of my head. My ‘illustrations’ were my pot-boilers; I looked to a different branch of art (far and away the most interesting it had always seemed to me) to perpetuate my fame.³³

Here the reader encountering the story in its British periodical form might notice the connection between the artist-narrator’s self description – “I worked in black and white,

for magazines” – and the story’s material context on the pages of the *Black and White: A Weekly Illustrated Record and Review*. The story’s artist-narrator becomes aligned with the story’s illustrator who also works in “black and white” in such ways.

And yet while this passage allows the reader to understand more conclusively the artist-narrator’s professional status at the time of his encounter with the Monarchs, the description is all presented in the past tense and the parenthetical insertion leaves the reader “guessing” about the narrator’s present, the “now” that he alludes to. The story refuses to resolve the “guess” as to the present successes and artistic venues of the narrator; although by the end of the story, we learn that he does “obtain the remaining books,” we also learn that his critical artist-friend Hawley judges his art permanently damaged by the encounter. The narrator describes his inclination toward portraiture with an equally estranging temporal effect: while he “looked” toward portraiture to make his name in the future, the past perfect tense—of “it had always seemed” to be the most interesting—implies that it no longer seems to be so. Thus, although this passage emphasizes the illustrated *Black and White* context of the story—potentially leading the reader away from the words and towards their visual competitors—the strangely overlapping time effects of the language demand the reader’s full attention as they emphasize the non-static, layered abilities of James’s verbal medium.

While developing his formal effects to emphasize the powers of verbal representation, James also develops his thematic engagement with the problem of illustration through his artist-narrator’s struggles to use the Monarchs as models in his drawings. Once the narrator realizes that the Monarchs have come to request employment as models, he relates his disappointment that the Monarchs won’t gratify his

professional hopes or his artistic vision of painting their portraits: “I was disappointed; for in the pictorial sense, I had immediately *seen* them. I had seized their type—I had already settled what I would do with it. Something that wouldn’t absolutely have pleased them, I afterwards reflected.”³⁴ Here, the narrator articulates his vision of the portrait in terms of absolute mastery (“seen,” “seized,” and “settled”). In the *Black and White* version of the story, James further elaborates on the genre of portraiture: “But that’s nothing; a portrait is almost always bad in direct proportion as it gratifies the original or his friends. He himself can please his friends; the triumph of the painter is to please his enemies; they can’t get over that. At any rate the delight of the sitter is generally a bad note.”³⁵ While James trimmed this passage when revising the story for inclusion in the New York Edition, the artist-narrator’s belief that the portrait should be unconstrained by such mercenary motives as pleasing the one paying for the piece strikes an interestingly ironic chord in the context of *Black and White* in which the connections between high art and the market economy are continually emphasized through the advertisements.

Indeed, even in the plot of the story the artist-narrator depends upon gratifying the wishes of his employers with his work for the first volume of eminent author’s illustrated collected works in order to gain the commission for the rest the volumes. Yet despite his somewhat pressing monetary considerations, James’s narrator asserts that the artist’s triumph is to make the sitter newly strange, to render him in a new light, and to make him uncomfortable to himself and to his friends, but pleasing to his enemies. This passage makes the reader wonder what such a portrait of the Monarchs would look like. How would such a visual picturing differ from the narrative “sketches” rendered through temporal overlay and opaque metaphor? What sort of portrait would displease the

Monarchs – the sort we have already been given (reducing them to their parts, to their type) or a picture that somewhat satirizes their aristocratic type like the one that the artist-narrator imagines in which Major Monarch would pose as the poor orange-monger Oronte’s butler? While the narrator’s comments here relate more specifically to his aesthetic ideal for portraiture, the story’s material context within the illustrated magazine pages of *Black and White* continually reminds the reader that the artist-narrator and the reader are involved *not* with the high-art ideals of painting or portraiture but with the more commercial, pulpy low art form of popular illustrations.

While at first he dreams of seizing their type in a portrait, James’s artist-narrator then imagines the Monarchs to be ideally suited to the representational art of advertising. While James’s narrator bitingly remarks that Mrs. Monarch “was singularly like a bad illustration,” he also considers the couple to be perfectly suited for advertising: “What struck me immediately was that in coming to me they had rather missed their vocation; they could surely have been turned to better account for advertising purposes [...] There was something in them for a waistcoat-maker, an hotel-keeper or a soap-vendor. I could imagine ‘We always use it’ pinned on their bosoms with the greatest effect.”³⁶ The *Black and White* magazine context emphasizes the narrator’s linking of the Monarchs with the realm of advertising as the story and the illustrations of the Monarchs are placed within a landscape of print culture which includes multiple illustrated advertisements (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4). Interestingly, on the second page of the issue (see Figure 1.4), there is an advertisement featuring an image of a man with a Keen’s Mustard sandwich board that speaks to the passage above—the man literally has the ad pinned to his chest and his hat, coat, shoes and pipe seem to signify his status as a gentleman and suggest that even

though he is hawking mustard, he is promoting only the best quality of mustard – with a “reputation of 150 years.”

BLACK AND WHITE
THE UNIVERSITY BOAT RACE. APRIL 16, 1892

BLACK & WHITE

A WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED RECORD AND REVIEW

No. 42—Vol. III. [CONTAINS 12 PAGES] SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 1892 [PRICE SIXPENCE By Post 7d]

MELLIN'S FOOD
 FOR INFANTS AND INVALIDS
MELLIN'S FOOD BISCUITS.
 MELLIN'S EMULSION OF COD LIVER OIL and HYPOPHOSPHITES.

SUN LIFE OFFICE
 BUSINESS FACILITIES,
BONUSES,
 AND
SPEEDY SETTLEMENTS.

TRELOAR'S SPECIAL LOW PRICES.
 SEAMLESS BRUSSELS CARPETS.
 SEAMLESS GENEVA CARPETS.
 WILTON AND SAHIBY CARPETS.
 TURKEY, PERSIAN, & INDIAN CARPETS.
 CHEVRE CARPETS.
 TRIPOLI MATS.
 INDICATED LINOLEUM.

HALFORD'S INDIAN CURRIES
 OF ALL GROCERS, &c.

TRELOAR & SONS,
 68, 69, & 70, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.

Litchfield
 ANCIENT FURNITURE
 MARQUETERIE CABINETS
 RARE OLD PORCELAINS
Hanway Street,
 OXFORD ST., W.

MIDLAND GRAND HOTEL,
 LONDON, N.W. (WILLIAM TAYLOR, Manager)
 THE FINEST & LARGEST HOTEL IN LONDON.
 The Change for Attendance and Light is now abolished. The Hotel is conveniently situated for the Theatre of Dr. Faustus, Eastern, and King's Cross. The Hotel Rooms are luxuriously and completely furnished, and the Private Saloon and Suite immediately the best in London.
 Hotels, Light every where. The Latest Grand Hotel & 2000 rooms, and a full suite with the most complete, modern, and elegant fixtures. The general arrangements require the entire satisfaction of the public. The hotel is situated in the heart of the city, and is within easy access of the principal business and pleasure centres. The hotel is situated in the heart of the city, and is within easy access of the principal business and pleasure centres. The hotel is situated in the heart of the city, and is within easy access of the principal business and pleasure centres.

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.
EPPS'S COCOA
 BREAKFAST OR SUPPER.

HOVEN'S CLIP for SUSPENDING STOCKINGS
 WITHOUT GARTERS
 SOLD EVERYWHERE
 SOLE MAKER—ALFRED BREESE, LONDON.

Figure 1.3: First Page of April 16, 1892 issue of *Black and White* Magazine

Midland Grand Hotel claims to be the “finest & largest hotel in London” and an ad for Salvine creams and soaps. The material context of *Black and White* magazine highlights the potential advertising-function of the Monarchs and also reminds the reader that the illustrations—both those by Rudolph Blind that dominate the pages of *Black and White*, and those produced in the fictional world of the story by the artist-narrator—are used to advertise and market the stories more effectively to the public. In other words, despite the artist-narrator’s protests that the Monarchs are perfectly designed for advertisements and thus are not well suited for the high-art ideals of his illustrations, the magazine context tends to collapse the two visual media and emphasizes the connection between the form of illustrations and the demands of the marketplace.³⁷

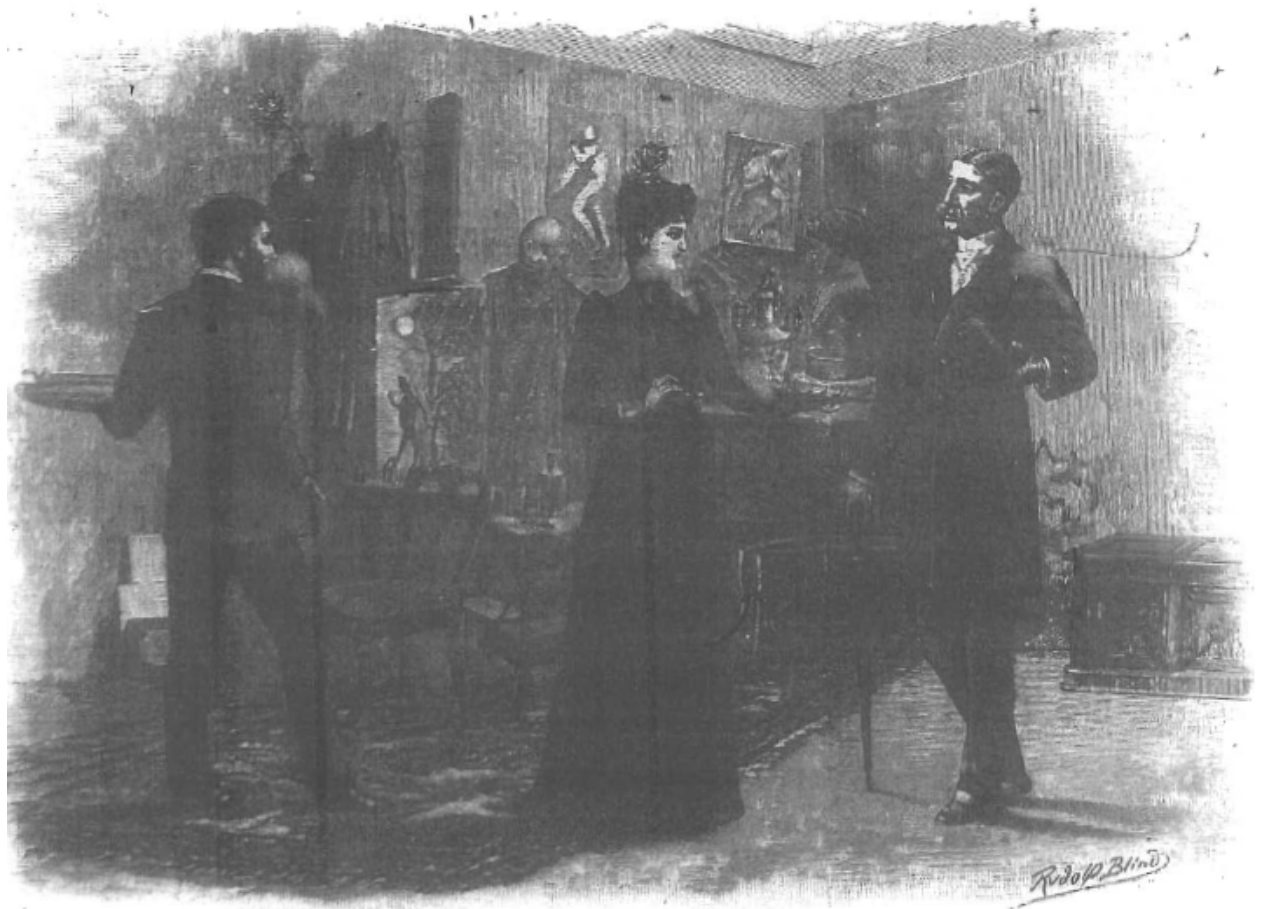
While my reading of the landscapes of print culture in the illustrated periodicals argues for the story’s (and James’s) awareness of and play with its publication context—particularly thematizing the merging of high and low art-forms and the links between art and advertising—many critics have interpreted “The Real Thing” as an exemplary case of James’s aversion to the mass market. Ralph Bogardus interprets James’s “The Real Thing” as a denigrating comment on illustration and he collapses James’s attitude and the artist-narrator’s: “To this artist – and to James – illustrations were ‘potboilers’ and painting was ‘far and way the most interesting’ branch of art.”³⁸ Bogardus interprets the story as establishing a firm hierarchy within the visual arts, elevating portraiture over illustration: “James’s artist understood that he was not free to develop his talents and reputation so long as he engaged in his ‘potboiling’ art. And his frustrated ambition provided James with a brilliant vehicle for putting illustration in its place within the hierarchy in the palace of art.”³⁹ Although James’s story and formal practice do attempt

to elevate the verbal medium over the competing visual illustrations, the relationship between the two forms is unstable and the context of the *Black and White* version of the story throws this instability into strong relief. Bogardus's argument takes for granted that the hierarchy in the "palace of art" can be maintained, yet when reading James's story in the context of its material friction within the market and with popular illustrated forms of print culture we can see that the story anticipates this context; it both experiments with and resists the competing visual media of its *Black and White* surroundings.

While I argue that James's formal strategies and thematic interest in the problems of illustration point to his engagement with and experimentation with illustrated vehicles of print culture, many critics agree with Ralph Bogardus and regard all of the illustrated serial publications of James's texts to be undesirable in their visual competition for attention that "add[s] nothing to the text, James's prose could just as easily do without them."⁴⁰ On Blind's illustrations, Bogardus is even more critical: "The characters in the illustrations appear stiff, their faces somewhat wooden. Their presence alongside the text adds a disagreeable quality to James's tale. But worse, their stiffness contributes an unintended irony to a story that dwells party on the married couple whose lack of variety as models, we recall, impeded the success of the illustrator in his attempt to make illustrations based on them."⁴¹ Why must we assume that the added irony is "unintended"? Do the images of Mrs. Churm and Oronte appear equally stiff? What qualities make these images read as stiff? I am interested in locating precisely what in the illustrations or in the image-text relationship makes Bogardus so "uncomfortable." What is so "disagreeable" about these drawings?

The first of the three illustrations by Rudolph Blind appears on the second page of the story and perhaps most dramatically captures the “stiff” attitudes of the Monarchs; yet unlike Bogardus, I read the image as intentionally portraying this stiffness and also the awkwardness of the artist-narrator’s relation to the couple (see Figure 1.5). The caption, “Mrs. Monarch Went Through Her Paces Before Me, And Did It Quite Well,” singles out this moment in which the artist-narrator is somewhat unwillingly placed in the role of appraiser; the artist-narrator remarks on his reluctance to take up this role earlier in the scene: “though it was an embarrassment to find myself appraising physically, as if they were animals on hire or useful blacks, a pair whom I should have expected to meet only in one of the relations in which criticism is tacit, I looked at Mrs. Monarch judiciously enough to be able to exclaim, after a moment, with conviction: “Oh yes, a lady in a book!””⁴² The narrator’s discomfort with his position as judge here is aligned with his uneasiness with the seemingly inverted social hierarchy of their relative positions—he feels like he is being placed above them as though they were an “inferior” species or race and yet their appearance contradicts any sense of superiority. Blind’s illustration captures the artist’s discomfort with his position; the depiction of the artist’s awkward stance (with his face and expression mostly hidden from the viewer) and of his askance glance at the pair creates a mood of tension in their relation.⁴³ Additionally, the multiple artist’s forms and other figures glancing away from the pair reinforce this sense of the illicitness of the artist’s gaze at Mrs. Monarch’s “paces”: the two figures in the rectangular frames on the wall on opposite sides of Mrs. Monarch’s head both face away from her; the partial bust in the corner seems to face toward the wall away from her display; the figure on the canvas pointedly walks away from the couple; and perhaps

most noticeably the uncanny bald mannequin stares back at the artist with a slightly tilted head from behind the easel and seems to challenge or question his position as appraiser of Mrs. Monarch's exhibition. Blind's decision to portray the shared gaze of the couple emphasizes the uneasiness of the artist's sidelong look and the multiple gazes directed away from Mrs. Monarch and gestures toward the strong bond between the Monarchs described elsewhere in the text.⁴⁴



⁴⁴ MRS. MONARCH WENT THROUGH HER PACES BEFORE ME, AND DID IT QUITE WELL.”

Figure 1.5: “MRS. MONARCH WENT THROUGH HER PACES BEFORE ME, AND DID IT QUITE WELL.”

Interestingly, the caption is actually a misquotation of James's text. The passage in which Major Monarch urges his wife to show off her smartness actually reads: “She

walked to the end of the studio, and then she came back blushing, with her fluttered eyes on her husband. I was reminded of an incident I had accidentally had a glimpse of in Paris—being with a friend there, a dramatist about to produce a play—when an actress came to him to ask to be entrusted with a part. She went through her paces before him, walked up and down as Mrs. Monarch was doing. Mrs. Monarch did it quite well, but I abstained from applauding. It was very odd to see such people apply for such poor pay.”⁴⁵ The longer passage, which gets clipped and condensed for Blind’s caption, narrates an interesting comparison of Mrs. Monarch’s actions with the narrator’s memory of a past experience of being a similarly awkward observer (suggested by his stress that his glimpsing of the scene happened only “accidentally”). This moment thus reiterates James’s formal experimentation with layering temporalities as it overlays two different moments in the narrator’s experience to describe the scene and to qualify his appraisal of Mrs. Monarch’s performance—he can assert that she “did it quite well” because of his memory of the earlier “pacing” and yet the comparison also brings out the strangeness of this moment because of the unexpectedly aristocratic appearance of Mrs. Monarch seems to disqualify her from playing such a role. Blind’s caption negates the temporal overlay of the artist-narrator’s description and instead casts everything in the simple past tense emphasizing the one moment of the artist’s appraisal of Mrs. Monarch’s paces. The large and very legible illustrator’s signature appears right after (and just above) the re-crafted caption and seems to place Blind in the position of authoring the quote as well as illustrating the scene.

The *Black and White* context highlights the complex dialectic between verbal and visual media emphasized in both the formal experimentation and the thematic core of

James's "The Real Thing." The problem of illustration and particularly of using the Monarchs for illustrations forms the center of the plot of the story. Many critics have taken the question of illustrating the "real" versus the "represented" thing as James's commentary on understandings of the literary practice of realism. Those critics often affirm Ralph Bogardus's assertion that the Monarchs are best read as flat glossy surfaces that parody easy conceptions of realism as a simple reproduction of life. Bogardus argues that "The Real Thing": "was an answer to the vulgar critical belief [...] that literary realism meant only that art imitates life, and the Monarchs were sardonic parodies of the opposite, Wildean view, 'life imitates art.' James was suggesting that, in themselves, the surfaces of life are meaningless. Life requires probing and imagination if it is to take on meaning."⁴⁶ Here, Bogardus reads the Monarchs as embodying a brand of faux realism that James juxtaposes with the more psychologically deep realism achieved through the "acts of imagination" performed by Oronte and Churm.⁴⁷ However, this analysis of the agency of these two figures and of James's authorial attitude towards them seems unconvincing. Over the course of James's story we never see more of Mrs. Churm's or Oronte's interiority than we do of the Monarchs'. And while the two lower-class models remain relatively "flat" and undeveloped for the reader, the pathos of the story's denouement resides in the Monarchs' imaginative leap to place themselves in the role of servants to the servant-like models.

The Monarchs perform small yet "eloquent" gestures of imagining how they might "do" for the narrator: they clean up his dishes and his paint rags, serve his tea, and fix Miss Churm's hair. Rudolph Blind highlights the importance of one of these moments of sacrifice and reversal of class-roles in his illustration of the moment when

Mrs. Monarch serves Oronte his tea. In Blind's image, it is Oronte who seems to be all surface and who bends obsequiously taking on the somewhat satirical character of the foppish "gentleman" squeezing his crush hat with an elbow, while Mrs. Monarch stands looking down on him, her body rigidly stiff.⁴⁸ This image dramatizes the pliability of Oronte and the unyielding quality of Mrs. Monarch, but does not suggest the depth of the former at the expense of the flatness of the latter—rather Mrs. Monarch's stature and pose suggest her maintenance of her pride despite the reversal of their positions and Oronte's dramatic bending suggests his discomfort with his new role. Interestingly, the illustrator perhaps intentionally mimics the tendency of the story's internal artist's to draw Mrs. Monarch as too tall, here she towers over the diminutive, bent form of Oronte.



Figure 1.6: "MRS. MONARCH BROUGHT THE MODEL A CUP OF TEA, AND HE TOOK IT FROM HER AS IF HE HAD BEEN A GENTLEMAN AT A PARTY, SQUEEZING A CRUSH HAT WITH HIS ELBOW."

As the artist-narrator realizes, the determination of the Monarchs at the end of the story leads to the pathos and memorable quality of the encounter: "When it came over me, the latent eloquence of what they were doing, I confess that my drawing blurred for a moment—the picture swam. They had accepted their failure, but they couldn't accept their fate. They had bowed their heads, in bewilderment, to the perverse and cruel law in virtue of which the real thing could be so much less precious than the unreal; but they

didn't want to starve. If my servants were my models, my models might be my servants. They would reverse the parts."⁴⁹ The narrator cannot accept this reversal and the "eloquence" of the Monarchs' sacrifice and determination—and thus he pays them to go away and finishes his illustrations with the more adaptable models of Oronte and Miss Churm. However, perhaps the superior usefulness of Churm and Oronte is not because of their hidden depths as Bogardus suggests, but rather because of their superficiality; they are more useful to the artist-narrator precisely because they are *all* surface and no depth and thus can transform themselves easily to the artist's vision.⁵⁰ The Monarchs, on the other hand, are stiff and unyielding precisely because they are *not* only surface: they have a solid, weighty substance to them that refuses to mold itself into any other shape. Indeed, as my reading of the opening encounter has shown, they are not at all what they first appear – wealthy portrait sitters – but instead embody the unpalatable reality of the shabby-genteel.

The Monarchs threaten the artist-narrator's equilibrium mainly because they refuse to look like anything but themselves in his representations and because what they look like—the elegant type of the "lady" and the "gentleman"—proves to be a sad fallacy: they appear as if they "had ten thousand a year" while they are actually penniless and dependent on the narrator's goodwill. The Monarchs are unsuited for modeling because they remain incapable of making their bodies "express" anything other than themselves; the narrator complains that: "[Mrs. Monarch's] figure had no variety of expression—she herself had no sense of variety. You may say that this was my business, was only a question of placing her. I placed her in every conceivable position, but she managed to obliterate the differences. She was always a lady, certainly, and, into the

bargain, was always the same lady. She was the real thing, but always the same thing.”⁵¹ Here the narrator expresses his frustration over Mrs. Monarch’s continual eluding of his mastering grasp – she refuses to look like his vision and distorts his representational medium; all of his sketches make her too tall and show her looking like “the same lady.” The narrator’s struggles to portray the Monarchs accurately highlight the complex power dynamics involved in representation. While Miss Churm (the freckled cockney model) and Oronte (the Italian street-vendor) are entirely malleable and can put on whatever identity or character the artist requires, the Monarchs refuse to do so. Indeed, they irritate the artist-narrator by the confidence in their own value (“In all her dealings with me [... there was] an implication that this was lucky for *me*”) and he unsuccessfully attempts to subdue them to his mastering will: “nothing I could do would keep *him* down.”⁵² James’s narrator uses the language of domination here to characterize his frustrations with the resistant quality of the Monarchs.

The narrator then expresses his fears about losing representational control: “I adored variety and range, I cherished human accidents, the illustrative note; I wanted to characterise closely, and the thing in the world I most hated was the danger of being ridden by a type.”⁵³ Here the narrator figures his fears in terms of his own domination by another, his dislike of being “ridden” here functions as a real danger in the story. Yet the dramatic turn from “danger” in the story, does not entirely revolve around being ridden by the Monarchs on the page, but instead concerns the narrator’s refusal to be controlled by his sympathetic response to their pleas for help and his guilty rejection of their desperate sacrifices for survival. The artist-narrator’s struggle to dominate the Monarch’s within his illustrations is inversely mirrored in his struggle to accept their sacrifices in his

domestic space; he cannot keep them down in the imaginative labor of his illustrations, and yet he cannot stomach their visual display of lowering themselves to the degraded tasks of cleaning up after him in his home.

Ultimately, the artist-narrator cannot manage Monarchs in either context—on the illustrated page or in his living space—because they refuse to fit comfortably into either realm. They distort his medium on his easel and they upset his comfortable sense of class hierarchy and propriety in his home. James’s story exploits the unique abilities of the verbal medium to communicate the artist-narrator’s experience of this multi-level discomfort with the Monarchs. The style of the story emphasizes the complexity of the artist’s response through layered time effects—James overlays the artist’s first, developing, and final impressions of the Monarchs—and through prose bristling with metaphors offering competing images of the couple. While James’s formal technique flaunts the ways in which it exceeds the capacity of visual illustration, “The Real Thing”’s thematic consideration of the problem and profession of illustrating stories foregrounds the text’s material context in *Black and White*, where James’s words jostle for attention with Rudolph Blind’s illustrations and with the often pictorial advertisements. While James’s story seems especially responsive to its context in *Black and White*—the story takes place in London and the narrator explicitly refers to his “work in black and white,” potentially playing on the illustrated magazine’s title—the story’s circulation among an even larger mass audience on the other side of the Atlantic through its syndication to multiple newspapers demonstrates James’s eagerness to appeal to the people through popular forms in America as well as in England. James’s willingness to market “The Real Thing” through his syndicate speaks to his interest in the multiple

opportunities and mass audiences available through American newspapers and indeed speaks to his multifaceted engagement with (and openness to) the available landscapes of print culture.

Reading “The Real Thing” in American Newspapers

“The Real Thing” appeared throughout the month of April in 1892 in the *Illustrated Buffalo Express*, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, the *Fort Worth Gazette*, the *Indianapolis News*, the *Toronto Globe*, the *New York Sun*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the *Detroit Sunday News*.⁵⁴ While by 1892 Henry James was well-versed in the practice of publishing his work in periodical and book forms in both America and England—to maximize profits by benefiting from all four forms and to curtail the common practice of piracy in both markets—“The Real Thing” marked only his third trial of syndicating a story for newspaper publication.⁵⁵ Charles Johanningsmeier documents how “The Real Thing” came to be marketed by the newspaper syndicate S.S. McClure and how lucrative the arrangement (he estimates that the story garnered James \$900) would be for James—like a “financial godsend” which would help to enable his experiments in the theater.⁵⁶ Pointing to the repeated delays and reduced cost of the story throughout its pre-publication marketing period, Johanningsmeier argues S.S. McClure had some difficulty in placing James’s story and suggests that McClure took a large loss on the story as editors preferred to purchase less dense and highbrow works; while McClure had difficulty placing James’s story, some editors chose to publish other more popular

authors that his syndicate was offering at the same time, like Margaret Hamilton Welch's alluringly-titled "The Drama of a Dimple."

Responding to the potential drawbacks of James's highbrow reputation for obscurity, McClure emphasized that "The Real Thing" was more plot-focused and realistic: Johanningsmeier cites a circular letter distributed to newspaper editors in which McClure asserted that: "Henry James is really one of the most talented of American novelists," but he also admitted, "He is sometimes perhaps too analytical." McClure immediately added, though, that fortunately "this tale is written in a very simple, direct manner. There are few digressions from the course of the story. The incidents are quite novel and bear the marks of being drawn from life. Both the characters and the episodes of this tale seem real and truthful."⁵⁷ While Johanningsmeier's archival evidence shows the anxiety of both McClure and his customers (the buying editors he was hoping to hook and who printed advertisements and headlines to the story which also emphasized plot over form), it doesn't account for the densely literary and non-action oriented style of James's story. The tension between the popular newspaper context and its emphasis on plot and exciting events and the formal maneuverings of James's story suggests James's strategic experimentation with the material contexts he knew would surround his work. James creates a story that includes the salable elements of an intriguing plot and captivating characters—the story is based around a strange encounter between strangers and the impressive personalities of the Monarchs and Miss Churm and Oronte. James's text also promotes a formal logic which emphasizes non-linear temporality, provides descriptions using multiple overlaid metaphors producing moments that bristle with images, and creates recursive movements within the sentences. James's story might

fulfill some of the expectations of its readers and their editors, but it certainly is *not* written in a “very simple, direct manner” as McClure promised.

The printed linguistic code (i.e. the words) in the newspaper versions of the story is almost identical to the *Black and White* version and the two contexts are similar—in their large paper format and their blending of visual and verbal media, their inclusion of advertisements, topical news items, advice to readers, and features like James’s high literary story. And yet, in contrast to their British counterpart, the newspaper contexts, with their wide-reaching circulation into non-urban and Western areas of the American landscape, suggest that the story’s London, metropolitan setting and situation offered a cosmopolitan ideal, a fantasy participation in foreign, urban culture.⁵⁸ Interestingly, the story’s content and headlines mark the text as both local and distant; the far-off London setting is contradicted by the newspaper headlines which often emphasized the local ownership of the story, with many papers claiming that the story was “written for” their readerships.⁵⁹ These two conflicting messages give a sense of hybridity to the story; readers were encouraged to feel that they were getting it first and that it was locally intentioned but also encouraged to picture a space and social scene that would have been geographically and culturally foreign to many of these readerships and locales. This strategy of compromise—both fulfilling readerly expectations to have original stories that were relevant to their local contexts and expanding those expectations through the inclusion of the London scene—resonates with James’s textual strategy of creating a formal style that emphasizes its literariness and unillustratability while including illustrations as the thematic focus of his story and allowing them to be printed alongside his words.

In addition to emphasizing that James's text was "written for" their local papers, the newspaper editors levied James's status as an eminent man of letters to market and to advertise his story and the reputation of their papers. The newspaper editors' advertisements for James's story often emphasize his name and high literary status as a "noted novelist" suggesting that they hoped that publishing James would increase their prestige, circulation, and advertising revenues. I agree with Johanningsmeier's argument that: "James's story itself, like the Monarchs, was used for "advertising" [...] The presence of one of James's fictions in a paper accorded it prestige, and purchasing editors must have hoped that highlighting this feature would result in more readers, especially those more genteel readers coveted by advertisers, and that advertising revenues would rise concomitantly."⁶⁰ The syndicate-produced illustration showing an author's portrait of Henry James, usually printed as the first illustration in the first installment of the story, speaks to newspaper editors' interests in promoting their publication of the famous Henry James. As Johanningsmeier points out, the inclusion of an author's portrait in this format was relatively unusual for McClure's syndicate and its inclusion here suggests the salability of Henry James's image as an iconic figure: "Possibly the story's lack of incident suggested to McClure the idea of making one of the illustrations of James himself [...] This was highly unusual for the syndicate, but James himself was a type of advertisement, a marker of social, symbolic capital for the paper."⁶¹



Figure 1.7: “Henry James,” *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, 3 April 1892: 25.

The formal, dignified profile view shown in syndicate staff illustrator F. C. Drake’s author portrait seems particularly designed to invoke a sense of tradition and eminence through its echo of the common book publishing practice of including a formal author-portrait as a frontispiece image.⁶² As Jakob Stougaard-Nielson has shown, James does come to play self-consciously with the genre of the author portrait in the New York Edition—choosing a photograph of a bust of himself as the frontispiece for *Roderick Hudson*, the first volume of the edition.⁶³ Interestingly, by 1892 the formal author-portrait was already somewhat passé as the framing gesture for works of fiction and thus Drake’s illustration links the James text to a past mode of traditional authorial positioning—perhaps strengthening the sense of James’s illustriousness and long career, but also placing him as a somewhat antiquated figure, not quite of the “present day.”⁶⁴

The multiple headlines used by the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* to introduce the first installment of the story emphasize the multiple frames for reading the story that the newspaper context offers:



Figure 1.8: Headlines from Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, 3 April 1892: 25.

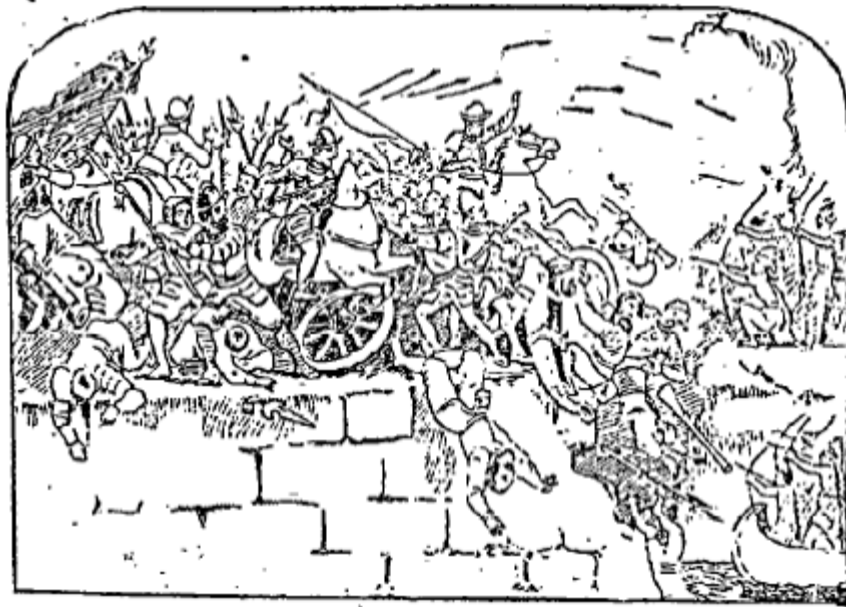
In these headlines, there is a tension between the story's fictionality (and its connection to "A Noted Novelist") and its status as representing something "realistic" and "of the present day." This introduction also evokes a certain shiftiness about the implied point of view: the line "Story of an Artist and His Models" suggests that the story will come from the artist's perspective while "The Life of Artists Models from the Plain, Every Day Stand-point" seems to be more focused on the Models' lives and to be told from an external journalistic point-of-view. Although James's formal techniques in the story could hardly be less "plain," "every day," or journalistic, the *Inter-Ocean*'s pages display his story in columns adjacent to an equally long non-fictional (if somewhat sensational) account of "Alvarado's Leap: Memories of the Conquest of Mexico" (see Figure 1.9)

In the full page display of the *Inter-Ocean*'s printing of the first installment of "The Real Thing" James's author portrait becomes metonymically linked with the ringed portraits of Ferdinand Cortez and Pedro di Alvarado, and Drake's images of the Monarchs and Miss Churm are juxtaposed with images of a violent battle and of the landscape of "The City of Mexico Rebuilt 1521 A.D.." ⁶⁵ The contrast between the two illustrated featured items on the page emphasizes the centrality of interior spaces to James's text and the very different scale of his story. Drake's illustration of the Artist and Major Monarch viewing Mrs. Monarch's display of "smartness" in a richly textured, furnished room depicts a very different kind of "action" to that invoked by the adjacent image of "The Famous Fight on the Causeway" (see Figures 1.10 and 1.11).



"GET UP, MY DEAR, AND SHOW HOW SMART YOU ARE."

Figure 1.10: F.C. Drake's Illustration, *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, 3 April 1892: 25



THE FAMOUS FIGHT ON THE CAUSEWAY.

Figure 1.11: Illustration for “Alvarado’s Leap” Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, 3 April 1892: 25

While the “Famous Fight” image functions to communicate movement (seen in the multiple arrows flying through the air and the bodies captured mid-fall) and a sense of the mass of people involved in the battle, Drake’s image of the interior drama enacted in the artist’s studio evokes dramatic action on a much smaller scale through the anguished expression marking Mrs. Monarch’s face and conveying the pained stasis of Mrs. Monarch suffering under the men’s gazes. The juxtaposition of the two image-texts demonstrates the multiple types of visual and verbal narratives on offer to the newspaper’s readerships and also brings out James’s focus on character interaction, smaller scale dramatic moments, and the social sphere of interior spaces.

The context of the *Inter-Ocean* and of the other American newspapers featuring James’s text blurs the lines between genres as works of fiction, news pieces, non-fiction accounts, advice columns, and reviews all jostle against one another on the same pages; the other two items sharing the page with James’s story and “Alvarado’s Leap” are a

column advising purchasers about “The Sizes of Books” and a review of a memorial volume about George Washington. Just as the newspaper context emphasizes the multiplicity of genres on offer for its diverse readerships, reading James’s story in these contexts emphasizes “The Real Thing”’s openness to multiple and often contradictory frames and marketing strategies. For example, the headlines, adjacent pieces, and illustrations surrounding the first installment of the story in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* advertise the story as made for local consumption and while also offering a glimpse onto the foreign London scene. These framing gestures market the story as new, current and relevant and yet the author-portrait also ties the text to somewhat outmoded traditions of representing authorial eminence. And the headlines and adjacent non-fiction news-like items emphasize the relevance of the story to “real” life while also pointing to its fictionality through their titling of the text as a “story” by a “noted novelist.” These contradictory impulses echo James’s own at times conflicted relationship with the mass public that he sought out through syndication and popular publishing. As Johanningsmeier avers: “James's contradictory feelings about fame and fortune among such readers are best expressed in just two sentences of another letter James wrote to Howells, this time in 1898 after the publication of "The Turn of the Screw," which he described as "the most abject, down-on-all-fours pot-boiler, pure & simple, that a proud man brought low ever perpetrated" (*LE* 309). Rather than be ashamed of himself, however, James gleefully added, "He will do it again & again, too, even for the same scant fee: it's only a question of a chance!"⁶⁶

Conclusion

James's exuberance about succeeding to sell his art on the mass market stems not only from the promise of earning money (as he says he would do it even for a "scant fee"), but also speaks to his excitement about engaging with a larger public and with the popular forms through which his works could best reach them. While many critics point to James's unsuccessful experiments with the theatre throughout the 1890s as exemplars of his (failed) dream of reaching a mass audience, I argue that reading "The Real Thing" in its periodical contexts demonstrates that James also eagerly experimented with the other popular and widely circulating form of the illustrated periodical to speak to the mass public on both sides of the Atlantic. James uses his understanding of the landscape of illustrated periodical contexts to develop a formal practice that plays with and refashions the print culture conditions for the production and dissemination of his work. In *Black and White*, "The Real Thing" is book-ended by two full page visual narratives: immediately preceding the story there is a collage of five scenes telling the story of "How Revolutions Are Made in the Spanish-American Republics" and the page after the story's conclusion features an illustration of the many figures and activities comprising "The Stock Exchange Steeplechase at Potter's Bar." James's verbal narrative employs formal strategies to compete with the visual images—the huge number of illustrations, cartoons, and visual narratives, and the multiple pages of advertisements that bracket the issue—that dominate the British magazine. James's text also circulated among many illustrations, advertisements, and competing journalistic prose in the American newspapers and its complex narrative strategies—its overlaying of multiple temporalities, its layering of metaphors, and its recursive sentence structure—anticipate this context and disable the quickly comprehensive reading-practices encouraged by other elements in the

papers. James anticipates and plays with these vehicles of print culture and uses them as a fertile source for his formal experimentation and for the content of his story; thematically he takes up the subjects of illustration and advertisement and formally he constructs a text which carves out a unique space for the readerly performance required for the consumption of his narrative.

Anne Margolis provides a brief survey of the gradual merging of the features of magazine publishing and readerships with the features of newspapers. She notes that newspapers “began issuing Sunday editions with “literary” supplements in the eighties, a blow against which the magazines retaliated by including more “solid matter”—articles on history, biography, economic and political—and less fiction. This shift left less room for purely literary material such as James’s and served to lessen the distinction between newspapers and magazines in content, tone, and pace, a distinction crucial to James’s ability to make assumptions about the quality of his magazine audience” (58). Indeed, even the amount of advertising and the distinction in price between magazines and newspapers began to be blurred by the end of the nineteenth century; as Margolis points out: “as advertising increasingly came to augment subscriptions as the economic base of the magazines, the distinction in price between newspapers and magazines also began to diminish; general magazines found themselves addressing a much wider, if less discriminating, public” (59).⁶⁷ So although there were key differences between the ways in which James’ story might have read within the *Black and White* context as opposed to the syndicated version appearing in U.S. newspapers, the two vessels of print offered increasingly similar visual landscapes to frame his work.

James uses an interesting metaphor to describe the demand for periodical literature in his 1891 essay “Criticism”: “Periodical literature is a huge, open mouth which has to be fed—a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled [...] It is like a regular train which starts at an advertised hour, but which is free to start only if every seat be occupied. The seats are many, the train is ponderously long, and hence the manufacture of dummies for the seasons when there are not passengers enough” (59). While this image is not overwhelming positive—the notes of monstrosity, mechanization, and the possibility of “dummies” serving as filler—it is also not entirely negative as it conveys the almost endless sense of opportunity evoked both by the initial “vessel of immense capacity” and by the rushing trains of modernity. The trains are mostly full of quality passengers (only including dummies for the dull seasons) and clearly are capable of providing a huge mass of readers with “regular” feasts of literature. While he was certainly wary of certain aspects of a mass audience and of more commercially-minded avenues of publishing, James was also awed by the possibilities offered through illustrated magazines and newspapers and my reading of “The Real Thing” underscores the ways in which he experimented with these landscapes of print in the form and content of his story.

In each chapter of this project, I investigate a specific artifact or vessel of print culture and explore how modernist authors and texts engaged with the problems and possibilities offered by these material forms. This chapter has analyzed the ways in which James used his special vantage point to experiment with the landscape of transatlantic illustrated periodical publishing that framed the initial printings of “The Real Thing.” One of the driving questions of the larger project is: what is the print culture of

modernism? For James, this question has urgency and in “The Real Thing” he reflects upon print culture in modernity and print culture as the landscape framing modern literature. In this story, James experiments (in both his form and content) with key elements of the periodical forms of print culture: his story plays with its own embeddedness with illustrated periodicals which functioned as fields filled with visual images (both illustrations and advertisements), as landscapes which juxtapose and thus collapse the distinctions between high and low art forms, and as material forms which underscore the connections between literary texts and the market forces, readers, and monetary exchanges which enable their production. While this chapter provided a synchronic slice of James’s experimentations with the world of illustrated periodical publishing, the following chapter takes a diachronic approach to investigate the ways in which James returned to the telegram—a form of print culture often circulated across the Atlantic—at different moments in his career. In my reading of Jamesian telegraphy, I continue to consider the ways in which James uses his experiences with print culture to generate new formal economies in his fiction and to reflect upon the material production of and networks of circulation for different textual forms.

¹ In *Henry James and the Problem of Audience: An International Act* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), Anne Margolis points out that James's settling in London placed him at a key site of access to both the English and American book trades: "James's next serial, *Daisy Miller* (1878), broke new ground in his effort to exploit the full opportunities of the English market and capture the attention of the British public. His friendship with Leslie Stephen, editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, provided him with his first access to a new source of income, the English periodical. Prior serialization in England gave James the option of selling each of his works not twice but four times, first to English and American magazines, then to book publishers in both countries. This meant that if he was careful, he could enjoy three opportunities for revision as well as four sources of income" (33-4). The difficulties of this "international act" as Margolis terms it, went beyond securing his rights to extend to developing his work to appeal to the different audiences: "James would have to perform a delicate balancing act if he was to work both markets well enough to secure popularity as well as literary success on both fronts without alienating either audience" (30).

² For me, James becomes a modernist through his connection to print culture, through his exploration of transatlantic markets, and through his play within the visual landscapes offered for reading in modernity. Critics like Anne Margolis have argued that James's interest in mass readers and markets makes him anti-modernist: "Although James's ironic tales of the literary life have usually been viewed as his hostile portrait of (and, to a large extent, his reaction against) the rise of mass culture and its effects upon his potential audience, James's career as a whole can still be seen as a valiant attempt to resist the increasingly seductive logic which these tales embody, the logic of an incipient literary modernism" (xiii). My project argues against this logic of a "high modernism" that is clearly anti-market and instead argues that modernist formal experimentation was generated through play with market forces and the material forms that those forces support.

³ The Monarchs do not fit into the artist's illustrative labors and they also do not fit in with his vision of a stable class system. The narrator must pay them to go away in order to alleviate his guilt over not being able to adapt to the sight of the aristocratic-seeming Monarchs functioning as his servants: "it was dreadful to see them emptying my slops" (*Black and White*, 507). *Black and White*. London: W.J.P. Monckton, 1889-1912. Hereafter abbreviated in citations as *B & W*.

⁴ *B & W*, 507.

⁵ Michael Anesko, *Friction with the Market* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). Anesko's central claim is that James's career can be read as importantly "animated by a lifelong appreciation of "that benefit of *friction with the market* which is so true a one for solitary artists too much steeped in their mere personal dreams"" (6).

⁶ David McWhirter, *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁷ Anesko, *vi*. Perhaps not surprisingly considering the tendencies of New Criticism, the scholars who cast James as Modernist and focus on his style tend to be most likely to forget or deny his links with the market.

⁸ Charles Johanningsmeier, "How Real American Readers Originally Experienced Henry James's 'The Real Thing,'" (*Henry James Review* (Winter 2006)), 75-99. Anne Margolis, *Henry James and the Problem of Audience: An International Act*, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985). Marcia Jacobson, *Henry James and the Mass Market*, (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1983).

⁹ Michael Anesko, *Friction with the Market*, *ix*. As Johanningsmeier notes, "The Real Thing" first appeared in book form in Macmillan's 1893 edition of *The Real Thing, and Other Tales*, which was sold in the United States as part of Macmillan's Dollar Novel Series and which sold for six shillings a copy in Britain. Interestingly, according to Johanningsmeier, the book sales for this collection indicate James's struggles with selling his work: "Despite these relatively low prices for cloth-covered books at the time, Macmillan was under no illusion as to the potential size of James's book-buying public: the firm had only 1,500 copies of this volume printed, some of which were finished and bound in the United States and some of which were sent to London for assembly there" (76).

¹⁰ As Anesko shrewdly observes, James did not entirely lose out when he was pirated, because the pirated edition of *The American* by Ward & Lock in 1877 was in some ways "the most auspicious start he could have hoped for. Piracy implied a felt demand in the marketplace; if James himself was unsure about the suitability of his fiction for English readers, at least one literary hustler with an eye on the cash register had no such qualms" (38). Anne Margolis reflects on the pirated edition: "This unauthorized edition, with its "multicolored pictorial boards, lettering and illustration in blue, red, black, tan, and yellow" on the front cover and advertising on the back, was obviously designed to appeal to the taste of the multitude. The cover illustration, which portrayed Newman protecting Claire de Cintré while here brother holds a candle which illumines some unidentified danger, represented an attempt to exploit the melodramatic aspects of the plot and provided a striking contrast to the modest cloth binding favored by Osgood" (32). Interestingly, James expresses his delight over the book design in a letter to his mother about the pirated edition: "Did I tell you it [the American] had been reprinted here by Ward & Lock, in the railway library with a wonderful picture on the cover? [...] But of course is a piracy, & I get no profit from it" (33).

¹¹ As Anesko recounts, James once negotiated a deal between himself and the Atlantic Monthly (i.e. Howells) for \$1200 to beat out Scribner's Monthly offer of 1000 (41). James also levied his advantageous position to aggressively market his texts in book form to different publishers. Interestingly, as Anesko notes, when James decided to make

publishing houses compete for the rights to publish his books, he was going against U.S. publishing custom and social doctrine: “James’s marketing instinct seems natural enough, but in the context of nineteenth-century publishing, he was violating one of the industry’s most venerable (though legally unenforceable) customs—courtesy of the trade. Defended at the time as the code of honor by which all gentleman-publishers did business, trade courtesy actually originated as a method of controlling competition in the sale of pirated British books” (42).

¹² Charles Johanningsmeier documents “The Real Thing”’s appearances in the following American newspapers: *The Illustrated Buffalo Express* 3 April 1892: 1–2, 10 April 1892: 5; Chicago *Inter-Ocean* 3 April 1892: 25, 10 April 1892: 25; *Fort Worth Gazette* 3 April 1892: 13, 10 April 1892: 13, 17 April 1892: 13; *Indianapolis News* 2 April 1892: 9, 9 April 1892: 9; Toronto *Globe* 2 April 1892: 5, 9 April 1892: 1–2; New York *Sun* 3 April 1892, sec. 3: 2, 10 April 1892, sec. 3: 2; *Philadelphia Inquirer* 3 April 1892: 15, 10 April 1892: 15; Louisville *Courier-Journal*, 3 April 1892: 19, 10 April 1892: 19; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 3 April 1892: 36, 10 April 1892: 26; Detroit *Sunday News* 3 April 1892: 10, 10 April 1892: 10.

¹³ Adam Sonstegard, “‘Singularly like a bad illustration’: The Appearance of Henry James’s ‘The Real Thing’ in the Pot-Boiler Press” (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Summer 2003)), 173-200. Adam Sonstegard documents that in the year 1892 eight of the fourteen pieces James published in magazines were illustrated (175).

¹⁴ As a reader, James was very attracted to elements of book design and attracted by illustrations. Catherine Golden, in her introduction to the edited collection of essays called *Book Illustrated: Text, Image, Culture, 1777-1930* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), uses Henry James’s admitted love of Cruikshank’s illustrations as an exemplary case for her arguments about the importance of illustrations: “Even Henry James, a virulent critic of the late-nineteenth-century illustrated book, commented in *A Small Boy and Others* (1913) that George Cruikshank’s pictures accompanying *Oliver Twist* made more of an impression on him than Dickens’s text” (7). Anesko cites an essay in which James discusses his interest in book design: “Late in life James remembered his youthful fascination with literature and “what would seem a precocious interest in title-pages, and above all . . . the mysterious or behind-the-scenes world suggested by publishers’ names—which in their various collocations, had a color and a character beyond even those of authors, even those of books themselves” (42).

¹⁵ Henry James, *The Golden Bowl* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987), 23. Hereafter referred as *GB* with page numbers.

¹⁶ J. Hillis Miller, “The “Grafted” Image: James on Illustration,” *Henry James and the New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship*, Ed. McWhirter (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 140.

¹⁷ *GB*, 23.

¹⁸ Miles Orvell notes the rise of photographic illustrations in both the periodical press and in the “popular taste” in his influential book, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989). Orvell asserts that: “photography in the 1890s was already beginning to have a significant effect on the way many younger writers thought about literary representation. For the distinction between truth and accuracy that was at the core of the realist’s self-definition was inevitably sharpened by comparisons with photography, which in the 1890s was becoming more and more a part of the common consciousness, as the periodical press increasingly reproduced photographs to satisfy the popular taste” (123-4).

¹⁹ Johanningsmeier, 77.

²⁰ Sonstegard, 176.

²¹ James’s artist-narrator imagines the Monarchs to be ideally suited to the representational art of advertising in opposition to illustration – how does advertising draw upon a different theoretical process of representation? While James’s narrator bitingly remarks that Mrs. Monarch “was singularly like a bad illustration,” he does consider the couple to be perfectly suited for advertising: “What struck me at once was that in coming to me they had rather missed their vocation; they could surely have been turned to better account for advertising purposes [...] There was something in them for a waistcoat-maker, an hotel-keeper or a soap-vendor. I could imagine ‘We always use it’ pinned on their bosoms with the greatest effect” (NYE 312-313). What sorts of work do the ads in *Black and White* magazine perform? Interestingly, on the second page of the issue (page two of Appendix A), there is an advertisement featuring an image of Man with Keen’s Mustard sandwich board that speaks to the passage above.

²² Although Adam Sonstegard argues convincingly that the pun on “Black and White” and the illustrator in black-and-white is intentional and suggests that James revised the story after he knew of its future publication venue (173). Also Sonstegard argues that the narrator’s denigration of his work as “pot-boilers” (in contrast to his dream of portrait painting) and Hawley’s insulting of the editors and readerships for illustrated weeklies offer a critique of the practices of periodicals like *Black and White* (180).

²³ Peter Rawlings in his article, “A Kodak Refraction of Henry James’s “The Real Thing,”” *Journal of American Studies*, 32.3 (1998), makes a similar argument but focuses on the triumph of James as verbal-artist over the narrator as visual artist, rather than focusing on the illustrated periodical contexts of the story. Rawlings claims: ““The Real Thing,” the tale itself, by virtue of its reflexive, reciprocal, rather than reflective or representational mode, is the prime candidate for being the “real thing,” in the Platonic sense, thus orchestrating some kind of victory over all visual media. This process, as ever, reinscribes James’s authority as writer, the artist-narrator being subdued and subordinated by the intricate ironic strategies of the narrative” (457).

²⁴ *B&W* 502.

²⁵ The central circle depicts the *W* amid a mass of lines, one of which grows out of the central angle in the “*W*” and seems to be an arrow pointing upward – gesturing to a nautical image, an anchor or a compass – yet the mass of curved lines growing out from the base of the circle seem to depict some kind of natural vegetation.

²⁶ Sara Blair offered this suggestive interpretation during a conversation about this project.

²⁷ At first glance a more visually inclined reader might see an intricate image and then “*HEN*” – a nonsensical opening to a James story.

²⁸ *B&W* 502.

²⁹ *B&W* 502.

³⁰ *B&W* 502.

³¹ *B&W* 502.

³² *B&W* 502. Again, in the 1909 New York Edition version of the story, James changed “friction” to “waste”, and “it” to “friction.” Also, “only to simplify” becomes “to an effect of elimination”. Additionally, there is a slight difference in the phrasing of the New York Edition text: “her tinted oval mask showed waste as an exposed surface shows friction” and the next line reads “to an effect of elimination.”

³³ *B&W* 502.

³⁴ *B&W* 502.

³⁵ *B&W* 502.

³⁶ *B&W* 502.

³⁷ Adjacent to the Keens’s add which emphasizes “Reputation” as “the best guarantee of quality,” an advertisement for Scott’s Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil is strange in its circuitous phrasing and its emphasis on polite expression: “*DELICATE*. Speaking of friends or relatives who come short of being what they would be if in vigorous health, we say they are “delicate”—speaking of others in like condition, we say they are “sickly.” Health is within the reach of many who flatter themselves that they are delicate when they are only sickly. There is nothing good but health. People are sickly when they are getting thin; they are plump when robust. The way to get plump and robust is by careful living. This may, or many not, include, for you, the easiest fat-producing food, Scott’s Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil. Ask your doctor.” Interestingly, the strange prose here seems

oddly in sync with the recursive temporality and circuitous development of the late Jamesian sentence in “The Real Thing.” Here the emphasis on the politeness of language and the shunning of more aggressive marketing (i.e. “may, or may not,”) seems to use these indirect ploys and almost Wildean aphoristic statements to attempt to create a high-brow vibe for the product.

³⁸ Ralph F. Bogardus, *Pictures and Texts: Henry James, A. L. Coburn, and New Ways of Seeing in Literary Culture*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984), 65.

³⁹ Bogardus, 66.

⁴⁰ Bogardus, 78.

⁴¹ Bogardus, 78.

⁴² *B&W* 502.

⁴³ My reading her differs from Adam Sonstegard who criticizes Blind for failing to place the artist facing the viewer to signify his role as the story’s narrator and who interprets his stance as merely a function of Blind’s need to characterize him as an “artist” through the visual conventions of the palette and easel.

⁴⁴ Interestingly, Blind’s interpretation of the scene differs greatly from the illustration of the same moment printed in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* and published by Charles’s Johanningsmeier’s in his article, “How Real American Readers Originally Experienced Henry James’s “The Real Thing.”” In this alternate version the two men are gazing at Mrs. Monarch and all three figures are facing the external viewer of the image—the Monarchs are much less united in this version and the female body on display is oddly complicated by the multiple gazes that return the look of the viewer.



“GET UP, MY DEAR, AND SHOW HOW SMART YOU ARE.”

Figure 2. “Get Up, My Dear, and Show How Smart You Are.” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* 3 April 1892: 36.

⁴⁵ *B&W*, 502.

⁴⁶ Bogardus, 132.

⁴⁷ Bogardus, 131.

⁴⁸ Interestingly this character of a gentleman with a “crushed” hat takes on a somewhat different valence in the cartoon-representation of a “sportsman on holiday” pictured several pages before James’s story in *Black and White*.



⁴⁹ B&W 507.

⁵⁰ Miss Churm is presented as vulgar and even cruel in her dismissal of the Monarchs and in her total lack of pity for their situation. While she is skilled at transforming herself into different characters and attitudes it is precisely because of her lack of substance: “the value of such a model as Miss Churm resided precisely in the fact that she had no positive stamp, combined of course with the fact that what she did have was a curious and inexplicable talent for imitation. Her usual appearance was like a curtain, which she could draw up, at request, for a kind of regular performance” (B & W 505). Interestingly,

the caption to Blind's illustration of Miss Churm putting on one of these performances takes away some of her agency and voice. The adapted caption reads: "MISS CHURM TOOK HER STATION NEAR THE FIRE. SHE FELL INTO POSITION AND SETTLED HERSELF IN A TALL ATTITUDE." (B & W 504). Yet the fuller passage allows her to make a joke and to be more active in taking her place; she has just come in soaked from the rain and when the artist-narrator asks her to look over a head, she responds: "'I'd rather look over a stove,'" said Mrs. Churm; and she took her station near the fire. She fell into position, settled herself into a tall attitude, gave a certain backward inclination to her head and a certain forward droop to her fan, and looked, at least to my prejudiced sense, distinguished and charming, foreign and dangerous." (B & W 504).

⁵¹ B&W 504.

⁵² B&W 504, 505.

⁵³ B&W 505.

⁵⁴ Charles Johanningsmeier has admirably tracked down these appearances and suggests that there may be even more that he was unable to locate.

⁵⁵ As Michael Anesko describes, early on in his career James was the victim of piracy with *Daisy Miller* (unauthorized copies circulated in the American market) and with *The American* (a cheap Ward & Lock edition circulated in the railway bookstalls in England). As Anesko argues, James learned from these experiences and used his unique position living in England but still an American citizen to enjoy the protection of both countries' copyright protections before the International copyright act of 1891 made these protections available to everyone. James was careful to protect his interests and adopted the double publishing strategy on both sides of the pond: "[James] promptly learned from his mistakes to safeguard his interests in both countries by timing his publications carefully and registering pre-publication copyright editions of his work with the Library of Congress when material that was to appear first in England anticipated the American issue by more than a few weeks" (36). As Johanningsmeier notes, James did publish in newspapers a few other times, but it was still a relatively rare form of publication for him: "At various times in his career, James consciously chose to publish his work first in newspapers: letters from Europe in the *New York Herald* in 1875–76, "Pandora" and "Georgina's Reasons" in a syndicate of papers in 1884, "The Real Thing" in 1892, and "Two Faces" in various British and Colonial newspapers in 1900 or 1901 ("Two Faces"). In a number of other instances, too, James published in quasi-newspapers with large circulations such as *Black and White*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, and *Harper's Weekly*." (96).

⁵⁶ Johanningsmeier, 80.

⁵⁷ Johanningsmeier, 80-81, cited from Papers, Copybook 1, 5 February 1892. Johanningsmeier goes on to cite a similar advertisement which speaks to similar concerns and emphasizes the strong plot of the story: "A syndicate advertisement at about the same

time also attempted to defuse editors' concerns about James's highly descriptive style, assuring them that James's "new novelette has a really strong situation, and is suggestive and dramatic" (McClure, Papers, Syndicate Publicity Poster, late 1892)"(81).

⁵⁸ Johanningsmeier notes that the correspondence between the versions is actually rather surprising because of the freedom allowed to editors to change texts once they purchased them: "once an editor had received galley proofs of a story from the Associated Literary Press, he was free to edit it however he chose. Combined with the fact that the text had to be retypeset at each newspaper, this system often produced great textual variations among syndicated fictions. With "The Real Thing," however, it does not appear that editors made any significant emendations to what the syndicate supplied. This is, perhaps, an indication of the reverence in which James was held as an Artist with a capital "A.'" (82). While the versions are mostly identical, Johanningsmeier does note that the newspaper editions—unlike the *Black and White* and 1893 book versions—do not contain James's italics of key words—he points particularly to an example in which the loss of italics slightly reduces the layers of meaning in James's text: "imagine Mr. Monarch's query to the narrator, "Wouldn't it be rather a pull sometimes to have—a—to have—? . . . The *real* thing; a gentleman, you know, or a lady" (*DM* 320) without the italics. One loses both the Major's quiet assertion that he and his wife are more "real" than others and James's purposeful prodding of the reader to contemplate what is "real" and what is not" (82-83).

⁵⁹ As Johanningsmeier documents: "In the case of "The Real Thing," on 2 April readers of the *Indianapolis News* encountered the story prefaced with the line, "Written for the Indianapolis News. Copyright." On the next morning, not far away from Indianapolis, readers of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* also found "The Real Thing," this time with a brief notice attached: "(For the Courier-Journal—Copyright, 1892, by the Author)." That same day, readers of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* also discovered "The Real Thing" in its pages, but this time it was "Written for the SUNDAY POST-DISPATCH." All of these brief notices gave the impression to local readers that what they were reading was "original," published only in their own paper" (85).

⁶⁰ Johanningsmeier, 85.

⁶¹ Johanningsmeier, 90.

⁶² Johanningsmeier, 89. Johanningsmeier goes on to further detail the usual process for McClure's syndicated illustrations and the specific images usually published alongside "The Real Thing": "McClure's illustrators would typically work from the text, making woodcuts that would then be made into stereotype plates; McClure did not allow authors to see illustrations or captions before they were sent out to newspaper editors. Local editors were free to use the illustrations or not, but of the printings I examined only two, those in the New York *Sun* and *Illustrated Buffalo Express*, did not include the syndicate's illustrations. For the first installment of "The Real Thing," there are typically three illustrations. One is a relatively standard, one-column-wide portrait of James [...]; another is two columns wide and portrays the narrator and Major and Mrs. Monarch, usually accompanied by the caption, "Get up, my dear, and show how smart you are"

[...]; and the third shows Mrs. Monarch with a fan in her hand next to a coal-burning stove, usually captioned, "I'd rather look over the stove" [...]. In the second installment, most papers printed two illustrations. The first shows Major Monarch looking up from doing the dishes and has the caption, "I say, can't I be useful here?" [...]; the second one portrays Oronte opening the door for Mrs. Monarch and is captioned, "Young Dante spellbound by the young Beatrice""(89).

⁶³ Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, "Frontispieces and Other Ruins: Portraits of the Author in Henry James's New York Edition," *Henry James Review* (Spring 2007), 140-158.

⁶⁴ Stougaard-Nielsen cites an eighteenth-century scholar Janine Barchas's use of James as an exemplar of the obsolescence of the form: "Barchas holds forth James as a late Victorian example who signified the end of frontispiece portraits: "Seldom does a first edition James novel carry a frontispiece. By the late Victorian period the frontispiece was an anachronism, a signal of style over substance appropriate to an ornamental library in a house full of non-readers""(146).

⁶⁵ Image taken from Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, 3 April 1892: 25.

⁶⁶ Johanningsmeier, 96.

⁶⁷ Margolis argues that the pacing of the magazine writer had to speed up to the "more hurried tempo of the newspaper journalist" (59).

Chapter 2

“Clearness is too expensive”: Telegrams and Formal Economies in Henry James

Introduction:

In *The Portrait of a Lady* (1880-81), James introduces us to his heroine, Isabel Archer, through Mrs. Touchett’s ambiguous telegram: “Changed hotel, very bad, impudent clerk, address here. Taken sister’s girl, died last year, go to Europe, two sisters, quite independent.”¹ Mrs. Touchett later explains her lack of clarity and her eccentric style in telegrams like this one to Ralph with the telling phrase: “clearness is too expensive.” Through the figure of Mrs. Touchett and her ambiguous transatlantic missives, James humorously emphasizes the constraints on the telegraphic form (i.e. the expense of clarity) and introduces the telegram as an important catalyst for plot developments (here announcing Mrs. Touchett’s “taking” of her niece and hinting at that mysterious person’s imminent arrival and circumstances) and as a form of communication which models the ways in which characters “read” one another in the novel. The telegram—as a vehicle of print culture for transatlantic communication and as a textual form through which James experimented with developing his plots and his formal techniques—figures centrally in many of James’s texts and in this chapter I investigate the motivations behind James’s continual return to telegrams by analyzing James’s employment of the telegraphic form in *The Portrait of A Lady* (1880-81), *In the Cage* (1898), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). Intervening in debates about James’s relationship to the literary marketplace, I argue that he uses the telegram in these texts to

experiment—both formally and thematically—with the ways in which market forces shape textual forms and the ways in which textual forms shape human relationships.

James recognized the telegram as a form of writing that is crucially shaped by the material conditions of its production in which words only travel after the exchange of coins. In a telegram to Mrs. Hugh Bell, James expresses his awareness of the “cost” of the telegram in a slightly cryptic missive of his own: “Impossible impossible impossible if you knew what it costs me to say so you can count however at the regular rates ask Miss Robbins to share your regret I mean mine.”² For James, the telegram functions as an ideal vehicle to experiment with the ways in which material forms affect communication and interpretation. In this chapter, I begin by considering the use of telegrams in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), then I analyze James’s more extensive exploration of the telegraphic form in “In the Cage” (1898), and I conclude by examining the role of telegrams in *The Golden Bowl* (1904), a novel in which all of the major relationships are at one point mediated by telegraphic exchanges and encounters. In all three of these texts, James returns to the telegram—as an active force in his plots and as a model for his formal strategies—to consider how acts of reading, of communication, and of textual production are inflected by monetary exchanges and by imbalances in knowledge, power, and in socio-economic circumstances. I argue that James uses telegrams to examine the intersections between forms of communication, imbalances of power, and narrative techniques.

By looking at more closely at James’s treatment of telegrams in three different texts from distinct moments in his career, we can gain greater purchase on how James returned to these forms of print culture to shape both the form and content of his narrative

experiments and to consider the connections between communication and class, between knowledge and power. I'm interested in stressing the connection between these different incarnations of James's impulse to return to the telegram—in each text he uses telegrams as important tools for developing form and content—and I'm also interested in maintaining the differences between these usages—in each text the telegram performs a different function as James uses it to explore different formal economies and to develop different structures and plots. In *The Portrait of a Lady*, James takes up the telegram to reflect on the transatlantic circulation of his heroine and to complicate the ways in which texts and characters are “read” across cultural and national boundaries. The telegraphic network at the center of *In The Cage* allows James to reflect upon the material and physical processes by which texts are produced and consumed in modernity and to experiment—in his narrative techniques and in the action of his story—with the uneven power and socio-economic relations implicated in these processes enabling textual production and reception. Telegrams mediate every relationship between the key characters—“the party of six”—in *The Golden Bowl* and James uses the multiple telegrams—and the telegraphic encounters that occur over the reading and interpretation of them—to emphasize the unbalanced economies of knowledge and power in these relations. James's play with telegraphic forms in *The Golden Bowl* emphasizes the links between his formal economies of power and the material form of the telegram—the “folded leaf” which underscore the connections between communication and cost. The similar and yet distinct telegraphic models employed in these three texts show the ways in which the telegram was uniquely suited to James's shifting authorial projects—James refashions his treatment of telegrams to experiment with major features of form and

content that he was taking up at distinct moments in his career. By closely examining how telegrams function in each of these fictional worlds, I argue that James continually returned to the telegram because he found this vehicle of print culture indispensable to his authorial practice.

A Brief History of the Telegraph

Experiments in telegraphy grew out of visual relays of messages over distance like signal fires and beacons on hills and a “shutter” system in which visual patterns of wooden shutters would replace beacons and fires to communicate visually over distance was first proposed at the end of the 17th century: “As early as 1684, Robert Hooke, Secretary to the Royal Society, proposed a scheme in which large boards or shutters of different shapes could be hung in a wooden frame to convey by their shape different letters of the alphabet, and viewed from a distance by using a telescope.”³ The first operational network of shutter telegraphy was not put into place until 1796, when telegraphy was first used to help naval communications and “a practical working system” was instituted by Lord George Murray who set up a “a six-shutter scheme to link the Admiralty in Whitehall with its bases in Portsmouth, and later, Plymouth, in order to communicate with ships at sea.”⁴ The shutter system was difficult to operate and was soon replaced by a “semaphore” system designed by Claude Chappé in which wooden arms were used “not directly to signify letters of the alphabet and numbers, but as a medium for the transmission of coded signals, arranged as a set of ciphers.”⁵ Like their predecessors with shutters, semaphore telegraphs operated as visual signals over distance and they required a staff of people in order to function: “Semaphore stations were

extremely labour-intensive, as consecutive stations were seldom more than 12 km apart. A staff of at least five were required at each: two to operate the ropes or windlass controlling the signaling arms, two to man the forward and rear telescopes, and one to supervise operations (he was generally the one who could read and understand the codes and ciphers used).”⁶ As these early, pre-electric developments illustrate, the history and ontology of the telegraph was linked to visual symbols, ciphers, codes and military uses. Unlike letters, telegrams were always publicly transmitted, to be seen by many, but only understood by a few who possessed the ability to read them and to decipher the coded transmissions. Additionally, the development and mechanical operations of the pre-electric telegraphic technologies emphasizes the complex system of transmitters and messengers who were required to facilitate and mediate the telegraphic form.

By the mid-nineteenth century telegraphic technologies were developing quickly; after a series of early experiments William Fothergill Cooke constructed the first electric telegraph “which consisted of three magnetized needles controlled by keys at the end of a set of six lines” and Cooke and his partner Charles Wheatstone got a patent in 1837.⁷ In its early years, electric telegraphy was strongly tied to railway networks; in 1838, “a line of telegraphs, the first completely developed telegraph system used for commercial purposes, was installed for the Great Western Railway following Brunel’s recommendation, between Paddington and West Drayton, a distance of about 21km.”⁸ Set up to run along railway lines, the telegraphs could be used to make sure that trains didn’t collide on the rails and to report accidents or stoppages; only later did it expand into wider cultural and personal use.⁹

The most substantial development of electric telegraphy came out of Samuel Morse's inspirational talk with Professor Jackson ("a celebrated geologist") "on the subject of electricity and magnetism" in 1832 on a packet-ship from Europe to the U.S.¹⁰ Morse was a portrait painter before this important voyage and he used materials from his painting trade to build his first telegraphic models: "The framework of the receiving device was an artist's canvas-stretching frame, at the top centre of which was suspended a freely moving 'marking lever', which in Morse's first attempt was simply a pencil making contact with a strip of moving paper. The lever holding the pencil was free to move from side to side under the influence of an electric current flowing in the coils of an electromagnet. To move the strip of paper uniformly past the recording pencil, he made use of the works of a clock" (52). Morse's major innovation was developing his Morse code to transmit signals and to record telegraphic messages: "In transmitting signals down his wires he made use of a binary code of his own devising, consisting of a series of short and long pulses of current, each set representing a particular letter or number, the set of combinations chosen being particularly efficient when transmitting an English text" (52). The pencil scribbling out coded dots and dashes on paper was replaced in the mid-1850s by a "sounder" device which James references in *In the Cage*: "the telegraph line operators at that time were noted for their skill in "reading" the Morse printing receiver by the sounds it made as the relays closed, which differed slightly for a dot and a dash. This led Vail and Morse to produce the Morse sounder, which became the universal receiving instrument in all stations whether or not it was accompanied with a printing receiver."¹¹ Technological innovations helped the spread of telegraphy; in England the Telegraph Acts of 1868-1869 nationalized and centralized the telegraph network,

enabling a huge increase in the private use of telegraphy. These acts gave the British Post Office control of the telegraphic networks and enabled a number of new developments that lowered the costs and widened the cultural reach of telegraphy—the use of telegraphy increased dramatically as the number of words transmitted telegraphically rose “from 4.2 million in 1874 to 15.7 million in 1899.”¹²

The telegraph, and particularly the electric telegraph, captured the interest of the public from its invention. Richard Menke convincingly documents the widespread cultural interest in the almost “magical” powers and promise of telegraph: “The electric telegraph represents “a watershed” in the history of communication because it decisively decoupled data transmission from transportation, relieving the circulation of messages from the constraints of physical movement. That is, the telegraph made possible the idea of communication in its modern sense, overriding any residual equation of communication with proximity.”¹³ While the ideas made possible by telegraphy circulated widely in the mid-nineteenth century, the everyday impact of the telegraph on the private lives of individuals would dramatically increase after the Telegraphic Acts. By the end of the nineteenth century, the private usage and cultural presence of the telegraph increased as the local telegraph-equipped post office became a regular feature of modern life and as numerous collections of “telegraphic tales” appeared in popular periodicals and even in book collections like *Telegraphic Tales and Telegraphic History: A Popular Account of the Electric Telegraph—Its Uses, Extent and Outgrowths* (1880).¹⁴ This book provides a brief history of the developments of telegraphic technology peppered with popular telegraphic stories and poems, including cases of people being married by telegraph and humorous entries about people who can’t understand

telegraphic technology or who use the form with humorous results similar to Mrs. Touchett's clipped style. (The book offers this humorous and slightly macabre example: "Matilda died this morning. Send fifty dollars worth of cheap jewelry.")¹⁵ In this account of telegraphy, W. Johnson also captures some of the narrative possibilities and pathos of telegraphic communication; in a section titled, "The Telegraph Office A School for the Study of Human Nature," Johnson cites an unnamable "writer" to touch upon the fictional potential of the telegraphic career:

In the words of a writer whose name we regret to be unable to give: "The telegrapher's window is an eye through which the operator looks upon the world. Before it passes in a single day more of the very wine of human experience than one could observe in a whole decade of European travel. The business man, brisk, keen and active, leers at him through the window; the burglar, bold and skillful, sends his telegram in cipher to a confederate; and the widow, in weeds, sends to her friends the mournful sentences: "Charley is dead. Come to me!" The telegrapher receives the communication respectfully, duly marks it with some hieroglyphic signs, and speedily the electric soul of the battery utters, a thousand miles away: "Charley is dead. Come to me!" It may be to a mother, to a father, or to a brother; but it carries a pressing request, and to-morrow, or the day after, the individual to whom the message is addressed is in New York. Or it may be that the father, or mother, or sister, or brother, cannot leave home; and then comes back the sorrowful answer: "Business is pressing; will come as soon as I can." And the widow weeps alone with her dead" (50-51).

This passage from Johnson's 1880 attempt to attract a wide audience for his "Telegraphic Tales" speaks to the multiple narrative possibilities and story-lines suggested by the telegraphic medium—the telegraph is imagined variously as a means of conducting business, of concealing crimes through coded transmissions, and of conveying the news and emotional appeals connected with loss. The passage constructs the telegrapher as an observer with a privileged vantage point, whose window operates as an "eye" enabling the telegraphist to "study human nature" and the language here anticipates James's interest in the power of the position of telegraphic workers in *In the Cage* where he plays

with the perspective of his unnamed telegraphist as an authorial presence. This passage illustrates the wide array of cultural registers that the telegram could evoke and even seems to point to James's shift from the International theme to the scene of the telegraphic window as it declares that "in a single day more of the very wine of human experience [passes by the telegraphic portal] than one could observe in a whole decade of European travel."

As I explained in my previous chapter, Michael Anesko and others have noted that James's "status as a transatlantic author gave him a peculiar and prophetic insight into the evolution of an Anglo-American market for literary work."¹⁶ Indeed, his position as a transatlantic figure made the telegram—as a form of communication ideally suited to transmitting messages across the Atlantic—an appealing and relevant form for James to experiment with in his fiction.¹⁷ The technology of telegraphy was already a well established fixture in modern urban life when James has Lydia Touchett serve as a telegraphic ambassador. By 1898—when he delves more deeply into the networks that produce and disseminate telegrams in *In The Cage*—the electric telegraph as a modern technology is dated and unremarkable, as James explains in his preface to the New York edition volume containing *In the Cage*. While the telegram had become a mundane fact of modern life by the end of the nineteenth century, functioning as part of a daily transaction mediated by a network of anonymous and yet obliquely threatening operatives, telegraphy had a larger cultural currency as a vehicle in popular fiction and particularly in pulp romances.¹⁸ Mark Goble has investigated the culture surrounding these popular narratives of telegraphic communion—including love stories conducted via telegrams like *Wired Love, A Romance of Dots and Dashes*—and has argued persuasively

that these narratives make up a “minor late nineteenth-century genre” he terms “the techno-romance” involving “better loving through technology.”¹⁹ Goble suggests that “the ostentatiously mediated textures of [James’s] later novels reflect a number of formal innovations James actively pursues from the mid-1890s on but also that these same innovations index ways in which James becomes more deeply absorbed, at this very moment, within the cultural effects of media technologies and the distinctly modern world of communications they imply” (400).²⁰ Like Goble, I believe that James’s interest in the technology of telegraphy (and its cultural effects) profoundly influenced his developing narrative technologies. Rather than focusing on the erotics of the opportunities of telegraphic communication as Goble does, I am more interested in the specific ways in which different aspects of telegraphy informed James’s fiction at different moments in his career.

“Mrs. Touchett’s Devotion to the Wire”: Telegrams in *The Portrait of a Lady*

At the pinnacle of his success as the purveyor of the “international plot” novel, James uses telegrams in *The Portrait of a Lady* as international communications which reflect the complicated acts of translation required for the circulation of and interpretation of the “American girl” in foreign contexts. Here, James uses the telegram to foreground these issues of transatlantic circulation and by first introducing Isabel through her aunt’s ambiguous telegram and through the shared interpretive struggle of Ralph, Mr. Touchett, and Lord Warburton at interpreting both the telegraphic missives and the American girl they anticipate. In the development and complication of his “international theme,” James constructs the central narrative problem of *The Portrait of a Lady* through the initial

telegraphic exchange by prefiguring the many attempts of his characters to correctly “read” one another and by announcing the persistent difficulty of these attempts. The novel hinges upon a series of critical acts of misprision and misreading and James uses the telegram to explore the price of clarity and to emphasize the difficulties of these acts of reading others and especially acts of correctly interpreting others encountered in foreign contexts—made painfully expensive in the case of Isabel and Gilbert’s mutual mistranslation of one another and rendered poignant in Ralph’s misreading of Isabel.²¹

At the levels of plot and of the larger thematic structure of the novel, Mrs. Touchett’s ambiguous telegrams present the character of Isabel as the American girl in Europe and anticipate the ways in which she’ll circulate abroad. At the level of formal technique, Isabel’s introduction via telegrams sets up a narrative model of expansive reading for the characters and for the external authorial audience—a model that emphasizes the problems and difficulties involved in reading from a distance, reading from small clues, reading in context, and reading beneath the surface. Isabel is heralded as the heroine of the novel through Ralph, Mr. Touchett, and Lord Warburton’s collaborative efforts at reading and constructing her based on the ambiguous texts of Mrs. Touchett’s telegrams:

“‘Is the young lady interesting?’ ‘We hardly know more about her than you; my mother has not gone into details. She chiefly communicates with us by means of telegrams, and her telegrams are rather inscrutable. They say women don’t know how to write them, but my mother has thoroughly mastered the art of condensation. “Tired America, hot weather awful, return England with niece, first steamer decent cabin.” That’s the sort of message we get from her – that was the last that came. But there had been another before, which I think contained the first mention of the niece. “Changed hotel, very bad, impudent clerk, address here. Taken sister’s girl, died last year, go to Europe, two sisters, quite independent.” Over that my father and I have scarcely stopped puzzling; it seems to admit of so many interpretations”’ (67).

In presenting Isabel through these terse missives, James sets up his protagonist as a character whom others are always attempting to decode and to anticipate and as a woman who is embedded in a system of economic transactions and relations. Mrs. Touchett doesn't mince words in her telegram because, as she later explains, "clearness is too expensive" and her hanging phrase—"quite independent"—introduces the complex narrative problem of Isabel's psychological and fiscal independence. Interestingly, this passage also raises the question of gender and points out that Mrs. Touchett, as a woman, is unexpectedly "masterful" in her telegraphic style. While clearly poking fun at Mrs. Touchett for her lack of the usual feminine traits, for her pragmatic hardness and lack of emotional connection to others, the passage also points out the associations of telegraphic forms with a brand of practical modern manliness and the ensuing discussion takes the communicative powers of telegraphic forms over oceans seriously as a force to be reckoned with and puzzled over.

Indeed, Isabel as the novel's heroine is first transmitted in this hard, un-expansive modern form of print culture and then her potential "meanings" are almost haggled over by the group of men who receive the economically succinct reports of her. Importantly, Isabel is a text written over by others here—first by her aunt's confusing language and then by the postulated "many interpretations" puzzled over by the men:

'There's one thing very clear in it,' said the old man; 'she has given the hotel-clerk a dressing.' 'I'm not sure even of that, since he has driven her from the field. We thought at first that the sister mentioned might be the sister of the clerk; but the subsequent mention of a niece seems to prove that the allusion is to one of my aunts. Then there was a question as to whose the two other sisters were; they are probably two of my late aunt's daughters. But who's "quite independent", and in what sense is the term used? – that point's not yet settled. Does the expression apply more particularly to the young lady my mother has adopted, or does it characterize her sisters equally? – and is it used in a moral or in a financial sense? Does it mean that they've been left

well off, or that they wish to be under no obligations? or does it simply mean that they're fond of their own way?' 'Whatever else it means, it's pretty sure to mean that,' Mr. Touchett remarked. 'You'll see for yourself,' said Lord Warburton.
(67)

Interestingly, here Ralph's playful propensity to multiply the possible meanings of his mother's words is countered by his father's sardonic assertions of solid determinable facts behind his wife's words—the implied “dressing-down” of the impudent clerk and the assured meaning of “quite independent” as “fond of their own way.” The elder Touchett's interpretations here rely on his knowledge of his wife's personality and her tone and also on his grasp of the general tendency of American girls when classified as “independent”; in other words, his certainty depends on his reading the telegrams in a wider field of personal and cultural reference which serves to pin down meanings rather than endlessly proliferate them. The tension between the perspectives of father and son here is emblematic of a larger thematic tension between Isabel's (and Ralph's for her) desires to be independent in multiple senses of the word and to keep her meanings untethered to any cynical realities, while other characters (Casper Goodwood, Lord Warburton, Henrietta Stackpole, and most successfully Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle) attempt to read her and pin down her meanings (and her actions). In this introductory passage enacted over the telegrams, Isabel becomes almost palimpsestic; her presentation through all of these plausible glosses emphasizes her status as “interesting” and her fate in the novel in which her character and her life are continually re-scripted by others even as she struggles to maintain her autonomy as self-authoress. The telegraphic exchange here sets up a struggle between the other characters and Isabel over who gets to “plot” her story. As she is continually offered different potential marriage plots, Isabel

rejects what she fears as the cage of predictably limited plots only to be “ground in the very mill of the conventional” in her eventual choice of Osmond (622).

In essence, the telegrams in the passage above and the model of telegraphic reading that the passage develops present Isabel as a text to be read like a telegram—only able to “mean” in the context of her material and financial circumstances, or after one has “seen for [themselves]” as Warburton puts it. And yet interestingly, when she first appears on the scene in the flesh, Isabel gains the opportunity to read the others before they “see” her and while they talk of her and the elder Mr. Touchett attempts to dissuade Lord Warburton from falling in love with her. Just after she is so much discussed in the narrative, Isabel herself appears on the scene and takes in Ralph as an object to be read before he notices her: “His face was turned toward the house, but his eyes were bent musingly on the lawn; so that he had been an object of observation to a person who had just made her appearance in the ample doorway for some moments before he perceived her” (69). Here, as Isabel appears both to “see for herself” and to be seen by the gentlemen who so anticipated her in their previous exchange, she is momentarily put in a position of power (seeing before she is seen). Yet the advantage is only temporary and the attentions of Ralph’s dog “Bunchie” call the gentlemen’s attention toward her and she is again presented externally by the narrative.

Here, the text again takes up and explores the tension between her self-authoring gestures and the attempts of others to make sense of her in new contexts and to pin her down to specific meanings and intentions. Ralph takes in Isabel’s appearance from a comfortable distance and he and the other gentleman script her into the “independent young lady” heralded by Mrs. Touchett’s telegrams: Ralph “now had had time to follow

and to see that Bunchie's new friend was a tall girl in a black dress, who at first sight looked pretty. She was bare-headed, as if she were staying in the house – a fact which conveyed perplexity to the son of its master, conscious of that immunity from visitors which had for some time been rendered necessary by the latter's ill-health. Meantime the two other gentlemen had also taken note of the newcomer. 'Dear me, who's that strange woman?' Mr. Touchett had asked. 'Perhaps it's Mrs. Touchett's niece – the independent young lady,' Lord Warburton suggested. 'I think she must be, from the way she handles the dog'" (69). Here the perspective shifts and Isabel is again presented and "read" based on her external signs and clues—her bare-headedness and her intimate handling of Bunchie—and while these appearances make her "perplexing" and "strange" to the two Touchetts, Lord Warburton attempts to classify her as fitting the terms laid out in Mrs. Touchett's telegrams. This exchange of views—following on the heels of the gentlemen's debate over the telegrams—shows the ways in which the reading practices set up by Mrs. Touchett's telegrams enable the central formal dynamic of the novel: the narrative alternation between presenting Isabel's power of sight and representing others as reading her external signs, as attempting to script her story, and as determining her possible meanings.

The attempts of others to write over Isabel and her struggles to maintain her freedom and ability to script her own plot (rejecting the conventional novelistic marriage plots offered by Warburton and Goodwood) figure her story and her narrative fate as a scrap of paper written over by many hands. This palimpsestic image is a recurrent trope in the novel as Pansy Osmond is repeatedly referred to as a blank page—"She was like a sheet of blank paper – the ideal *jeune fille* of foreign fiction. Isabel hoped that so fair and

smooth a page would be covered with an edifying text” (328)—and Countess Gemini is described as “by no means a blank sheet; she had been written over in a variety of hands, and Mrs. Touchett, who felt by no means honoured by her visit, pronounced that a number of unmistakeable blots were to be seen upon her surface” (328). These metaphors speak to the continual drama of authorship and reading in the novel which is first announced by Mrs. Touchett’s telegrams and developed in the narrative introduction of Isabel.

Additionally, James uses telegrams as motivators of key moments of action in the text—particularly as harbingers of illnesses and impending death. Mrs. Touchett’s mostly mocked telegraphic practice is redeemed in these moments of family crisis and her urgent subjects take precedence over her idiosyncratic style: Ralph “had received from his mother a telegram to the effect that his father had had a sharp attack of his old malady, that she was much alarmed and that she begged he would instantly return to Gardencourt. On this occasion at least Mrs. Touchett’s devotion to the electric wire was not open to criticism” (220). Interestingly, this passage suggests that in some circumstances—like this one—“the electric wire” is above criticism and the urgency of transmission becomes more important than the impersonality of the medium. Later in the novel, on the eve of Ralph’s death, Mrs. Touchett sends another telegram whose “rightness” again seems above the criticism of the narrative and indeed constitutes the most personal and appealing speech ever delivered by Lydia Touchett in the course of the novel: “A week after this incident Isabel received a telegram from England, dated from Gardencourt and bearing the stamp of Mrs. Touchett’s authorship. ‘Ralph cannot last many days,’ it ran, ‘and if convenient would like to see you. Wishes me to say that you

must come only if you've not other duties. Say, for myself, that you used to talk a good deal about your duty and to wonder what it was; shall be curious to see whether you've found it out. Ralph is really dying, and there's no other company'" (580). In some ways, this telegram forms the most intimate view we get of Lydia Touchett and her vulnerability ("there's no other company") and her relationship with Isabel.

This telegram is also crucially important as the document which brings about the open confrontation between Gilbert and Isabel that forms a crisis in their marriage. At this crucial moment in the development of Isabel's narrative when her power over her own self-authorship is most at risk, the material form of the telegram becomes a sort of hard fact that Isabel can cling to help maintain her "independence" and to define her own sense of "duty" when challenged by Osmond: "Isabel stood a moment looking at the latter missive; then, thrusting it into her pocket, she went strait to the door of her husband's study" (580). Where the initial telegraphic introduction of Isabel to the novel places her in the role of the text to be read and written over, here the material fact of her aunt's telegram helps her maintain her resolve to refuse this passive position under the dominating authoring hand of her husband and instead to break out against him as the author of her own fate and duty.

Ultimately, in *The Portrait of a Lady* James uses Mrs. Touchett's initial telegrams to set up his thematic interest in how the American girl circulates and gets read abroad and to develop the struggle for the power to author and read Isabel's story. While at this point in his career and in his fictional experiments, James was not interested in making the technology of transmitting and receiving telegrams central to his story, he does play with the telegraphic form as necessarily abstract and clipped. As Mrs. Touchett explains

to her son, the cost of transatlantic telegraphy determines the form and the ambiguity of her telegraphic missives: “‘All this time,’ he said, ‘you’ve not told me what you intend to do with her.’ ‘Do with her? You talk as if she were a yard of calico. I shall do absolutely nothing with her, and she herself will do everything she chooses. She gave me notice of that.’ ‘What you meant then, in your telegram, was that her character’s independent.’ ‘I never know what I mean in my telegrams – especially those I send from America. Clearness is too expensive’” (98). Interestingly, here, the expensiveness and the obfuscation that it brings are emphasized in the transatlantic context—the price of communicating, circulating, and being read across the Atlantic is “especially” high for telegrams and for American girls like Isabel. In his later novella *In the Cage* (1898), James shifts to the local context of a London telegraphic outpost to further develop his authorial interest in telegrams as coded missives whose ambiguity is in part determined by their costliness per word and as vehicles for experimenting with the self-authoring potential of his heroines.

“In fine print and all about fine folks”: Telegraphic and Formal Economies in *In the Cage*

Many critics have focused on James’s attention to the stage and on his mostly disastrous attempts at writing and producing plays in the 1890s and the shift in his literary output from mainly novels to other forms like dramas and short fiction during this transitional period in his career.²² In addition to this broadening of textual forms and genres, in 1897, James also shifted to a distinctly different method of composition through dictation.²³ Indeed, during the late 1890s, James was perhaps most aware of the

material production of literary texts and of the unique expressive opportunities afforded by different media and by different forms of circulation. By placing *In the Cage* (1898) in the larger context of James's concerns during the 1890s, we can better understand why James's return to the telegram as a central object and formal model for his fiction in this text focuses much more explicitly on the physical production and transmission of telegraphic messages and experiments more directly with the formal properties and social technology of the telegraphic medium. James's increased emphasis on how telegrams are produced and processed is coupled with an interest in the unbalanced socio-economic structures implicated in the telegraphic network of dissemination and consumption. The form of the telegram—its expensiveness per word and its avenues of circulation (purchased by the rich and processed by the working-class telegraphists)—crystallizes issues of class, power, and textual production in James's story. In *In the Cage*, James takes up one such working-class telegraphist as his unnamed heroine and uses the physical and social machinery of telegraphic communication as his central plot device—the drama of the plot depends on the intrigue caused by a series of telegrams and telegraphic transmission and its environs in the local post-office forms the daily experience of his protagonist—and as the grounds to probe uneven social relations and power structures. Beyond the content of the story, James uses the telegraphic situation to explore the formal economies of his narrative strategies for representing his heroine's thoughts and for reflecting her attempts at authoring her own story and at “reading” (and re-scripting) the communications of her upper-class clientele as ha'penny romances.

By 1898, the electric telegraph as a modern technology is dated and unremarkable as James explains in his preface to the New York edition volume containing *In the Cage*.

By the *fin de siècle* the telegram had become a mundane fact of modern life—no longer promising the idyllic possibilities of connecting people seamlessly, in the late 19th century telegrams function as part of a daily transaction that involves the mediation by a network of anonymous and yet obliquely threatening operatives.²⁴ Richard Menke argues convincingly that James is interested in exploring the ways in which communication through telegraphy is fraught and dangerous because of its mediation by telegraphic workers of a lower-class than most of the affluent consumers and senders of telegrams. Menke stresses that this new understanding of telegraphy at the end of the century as a highly mediated and no longer transparent communicative technology marks a shift from early fantasies of telegraphic connection and notes the tension between the supposed privacy of telegraphic messaging and the mediated system: “The lovers use the telegraph for secret, virtually instantaneous communication. Yet by reading and interpreting the messages of Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen, the unnamed telegraphist interposes a level of mediation, a layer that intermingles the materiality of communication, the content of her subjectivity, and the social structures of bureaucracy, class, and gender.”²⁵ While I agree with many of Menke’s points and find his reading of *In the Cage* provocative and useful, I think that situating James’s use of telegraphy in the novella within the larger context of his career-long use of the medium in his fiction allows us a greater purchase on the specific urgencies of how telegrams function in this particular case.

Thus, I would push Menke’s argument in a different direction to suggest that James’s story takes up the telegraphic network at this particular moment in his literary development to emphasize the ways in which that form of communication is necessarily

imbricated in an unbalanced class system through its material production and social network of distribution. James focuses on the ways in which telegraphic communication emphasizes economic imbalances because of the fact that the transmission of these expensive messages depends on the labor working-class people. Counter to the focus in *The Portrait of a Lady* on how texts and characters circulate across oceans, *In the Cage* reveals how telegrams also necessarily cross the gulf between classes in the local space of London. Indeed, James's description of the claustrophobically small "cage" in which the telegraphist operates and the location of her office in the midst of a wealthy neighborhood emphasizes the geographic proximity of the idle rich and the laboring poor in the metropolis and also underscores the huge social-economic divide between them.

Unlike Menke's more general rendering of the shift in how the telegraph functions in the authorial imaginary—no longer the fantasy of a transparent communication with an omniscient third person narrator here James presents narrative (and telegraphic) communication as mediated and opaque—my reading underscores the ways in which the James of the 1890s—an author struggling to communicate effectively to audiences on the stage (i.e. "readers" no longer distanced, abstracted, or anonymous but made physically present)—chose to use telegrams to explore and develop his interest in the social networks and exchanges required for the transmission and reception of messages. This story takes up issues of how to "read" others and how to translate their meanings across class-barriers; the gap between the classes is emblemized by the exchanges across the partition in the telegraphist's cage and James's story takes up the space of the local telegraph office to demonstrate the difficulty of making sense of texts produced in the modern marketplace and read in the context of the often blurry system of

social relations. *In the Cage* functions as a parable of reading which offers serious critiques of the class system and approaches the problem of how to manage cross-class encounters.

The story centers around a protagonist who thrives on developing momentary judgments and readings as far as possible before disqualifying them or dropping them after gaining new knowledge and the story progresses as a series of conflicting and overlapping “readings” of the telegraphist’s situation and as a series of her self-authored fantasies of romantic narratives generated the telegrams she processes. Formally, James uses free-indirect-discourse and ambiguous syntax to create readerly disorientation and to force the reader to adopt a strategy of reading the telegraphist within the context of all of her responses to make sense of the development of both plot and character. James plays with obscurity and confuses the relationship between the omniscient narrator and the telegraphist-protagonist to add to the narrative uncertainty of our reading and he continually emphasizes the telegraphist’s pride in her own readerly expertise—her ability to decipher the coded messages and actions of others—while simultaneously challenging the reading abilities of his authorial audience.

James’s preface to the New York Edition volume containing *In the Cage* echoes the sense of temporal overlay and renewal implicit in his larger project for the edition as he describes the genesis of his idea for the story. He opens his commentary on *In the Cage* by denying the need for any explicatory gesture because the topic seems to be self-explanatory and like an “old story”:

The second in order of these fictions speaks for itself, I think, so frankly as scarce to suffer further expatiation. Its origin is writ upon it large, and the idea it puts into play so abides in one of the commonest and most taken-for-granted of London impressions that some such experimentally-figured situation

as that of “In the Cage” must again and again have flowered (granted the grain of observation) in generous minds. It had become for me, at any rate, an old story by the time (1898) I cast it into this particular form. The postal-telegraph office in general, and above all the small local office of one’s immediate neighbourhood, scene of the transaction of so much of one’s daily business, haunt of one’s needs and one’s duties, of one’s labours and one’s patiences, almost of one’s rewards and one’s disappointments, one’s joys and one’s sorrows, had ever had, to my sense, so much of London to give out, so much of its huge perpetual story to tell, that any momentary wait there seemed to take place in a strong social draught, the stiffest possible breeze of the human comedy [...] One had of course in these connections one’s especial resort, the office nearest one’s own door, where one had come to enjoy in a manner the fruits of frequentation and the amenities of intercourse. So had grown up, for speculation—prone as one’s mind had ever been to that form of waste—the question of what it might “mean,” wherever the admirable service was installed, for confined and cramped and yet considerably tutored young officials of either sex to be made so free, intellectually, of a range of experience otherwise quite closed to them.”²⁶

For James, the germ of *In the Cage* is an old story because his encounters with places like the local postal-telegraph offices occur so frequently that they can be easily taken for granted. The omnipresence of offices like the one featured in his tale makes them an integral and thus not immediately noticeable part of the modern urban landscape. James takes up this site of modern exchange and communication and attempts to make it strange and new by questioning “what it might “mean”” if one of the young officials “made [...] free” to engage their minds in reading the exchanges which pass through their hands—here James’ phrasing hints at the potential power available to these officials to “make free” with their position and widened experience while also limiting that empowerment as only “intellectual.”²⁷ In this passage, James alternates from the point of view of the outsider visiting the shop—the “one” who enjoys the “fruits of frequentation and the amenities of intercourse”—to the “confined and cramped” position of the telegraphist. In his description of the genesis of the story in the preface, James signals his thematic interest in the physical environment and social “draft” of the local telegraph office and

his formal interest in representing the telegraphist's position from both external and internal perspectives. James achieves his dual perspective by using a third person omniscient narrator who often—but not always—relies on free indirect discourse to express the telegraphist's moods and responses. The narrative builds readerly interest in the female telegraphist-protagonist by giving frequent sidelong glimpses into her interiority. It also creates readerly uncertainty through ambiguous syntax and by blurring the lines between external narration and language that models the telegraphist's thoughts.

To better explain the strange texture of this shifting narrative strategy I will focus closely on the development of the opening pages of the text and on the introductory paragraphs which highlight the narrative techniques employed throughout the novella. The first pages of the story offer multiple examples of this narrative method and the readerly uncertainty that the alternating technique produces; the reader's unstable access to the interiority of the unnamed protagonist is increased in the opening pages by the fact that we don't know how to read or recognize what reflects "her" voice at the story's beginning. The story opens with the narrator's communicating the telegraphist's sense of her position from an almost external viewpoint, but quickly invokes her voice with the phrase "as she called it":

It had occurred to her early that in her position – that of a young person spending, in framed and wired confinement, the life of a guinea-pig or a magpie – she should know a great many persons without their recognizing the acquaintance. That made it an emotion the more lively – though singularly rare and always, even then, with opportunity still very much smothered – to see any one come in whom she knew outside, as she called it, any one who could add anything to the meanness of her function.²⁸

Here, the sentence structure and punctuation mimic the content—the passage explains that she's confined and the dashes work to bracket off or to confine that statement;

“Opportunity is much smothered” and so is the thought expressing the idea because it is placed in an interruptive clause, closed off from the rest of the sentence. The opening verb tenses and the initial simile also create a strange mix of temporal effects: time seems both interminable and too short. The entirety of her life seems framed by her confinement in the cage and yet it is only the short “life of a guinea-pig or a magpie.” The invocation of the protagonist’s voice at the end of these reflections adds to the ambiguity—rather than offering a clearer sense of “her” subjectivity—as the clause “as she called it” could refer to either the phrase “whom she knew outside” or to the sentence’s concluding phrase “anyone who could add anything to the meanness of her function.” Both phrases could reasonably originate in the protagonist’s voice and the uncertainty created by the syntax here emphasizes the narrative’s interest in representing the telegraphist from within and from without.

James enhances the sense of the strange overlay of times by beginning with the past perfect tense which suggests the distance of the protagonist from her “early” realization, and yet also emphasizes the endless inescapability of her “position” which remains part of the continuous present. The “early” seems to imply that her recognition occurs early in her life (i.e. that she is young when she takes up the position) and also that she was very quick to perceive the future conditions of her job as an anonymous observer of others. In this passage, the telegraphist’s life is figured as a mostly uninterrupted string of tasks only rarely brightened by the sight of someone who she “knew outside” and who thus, presumably, returns her acquaintance. The main character’s namelessness increases the sense of her anonymity even to the gaze of the reader. In the opening two sentences, the omniscient narrator seems to both flaunt his or her complete knowledge of

the telegraphist's feelings (in the past and present) and to intentionally veil or obscure that total knowledge from the reader's gaze. James emphasizes this power of withholding and the ambiguity surrounding his character by choosing not to make the subject of telegraphy central in this opening passage—not yet explaining that “her” wired confinement” takes place and is necessitated by her position within the local telegraphic economy of the grocery/post-office.

While the first two sentences focus on the telegraphist's awareness and assessment of her own separation from others and from the joy of reciprocal relationships, the third sentence illustrates her response to the actual tasks that she performs daily: “Her function was to sit there with two young men – the other telegraphist and the counter-clerk; to mind the ‘sounder,’ which was always going, to dole out stamps and postal-orders, weigh letters, answer stupid questions, give difficult change and, more than anything else, count words as numberless as the sands of the sea, the words of telegrams thrust, from morning to night, through the gap left in the high lattice, across the encumbered shelf that her forearm ached with rubbing” (314). By beginning with qualifying and expanding on the earlier statement about the “meanness of her function” which could have been in the narrator's voice “as she called it,” James enables this sentence to function as a potential instance of free indirect discourse. We might be inside her head here—the “words as numberless as the sands of the sea” could be her language—or we might be viewing her position more from the outside of the cage (across the encumbered shelf) and witnessing the narrator's flourishes. The passage describes the telegraphist as both a mechanized creature (performing mean tasks and surrounded by the constant “going” of the sounder) and as conscious and resentful of her

mechanization (the “stupid” and “difficult” seem to be partly suggestive of her voice through free indirect discourse). James begins his story by emphasizing the dual perspectives onto his protagonist and by blurring the lines between her thoughts and words and the narrator’s language—these effects demand careful reading to make sense of where the narrator ends and the telegraphist begins and they also encourage the practice of reading-in-context, a practice which depends on building up a store of knowledge about the protagonist to better judge what she would or would not likely say or think.

Additionally, the passage’s reference to her bodily pain in her aching rubbed forearm increases the reader’s sense of her humanity; her voice and body establish her presence in the text as something very different than that of a machine or a magpie—and the sense that she is caught in a liminal position at the cage’s opening onto the outside world and bruised by her contact with this portal. The painfulness of the telegraphist’s contact with this “gap”—a physical gap which also forms the division between the laboring anonymous operators and the rich customers—is echoed by the psychic torment she endures in the course of the story by her imaginative leaps into the magic realm of the aristocratic clientele and her ultimate disillusionment over what sort of actual power these imagined crossings allow her.²⁹ The narrative’s account of the telegraphist’s embodied presence and how that body is marked and delimited by her working-class status is intensified in the next sentence which introduces the “cage’s” enclosure within a grocery store by referring to the various offending smells—“The poison of perpetual gas [...] the presence of hams, cheese, dried fish, soap, varnish”—known and experienced by the nameless telegraphist (314). Indeed, the telegraphist is at the mercy of this unpleasant

medley of smells because of her “framed” confinement within her limited economic means—she must submit herself to these inconveniences because of her need to work and to continue to receive and process the telegrams so violently and ceaselessly “thrust” through her lattice. Here, the telegraphist’s physical disempowerment and her painful bodily mechanization are rendered necessary by the network of telegraphic processing and by the needs of her wealthier clients. The opening paragraph of the story suggests that the protagonist’s social, psychological, and economic captivities are required for the operation of the social and economic network needed for telegraphic communication. James’s narrative techniques in the story and especially in the opening sentences challenge the readerly labor required for this brand of literary communication and the readerly instability underscores the framed confinement of the protagonist. James uses the telegram here to experiment formally with creating a representational tension between the narrator’s voice and the voice of the telegraphist and to develop the thematic problems of class, power, and modern communication networks.

The story’s first section is broken into three paragraphs which continue to introduce and to “frame” the position of the telegraphist and these major thematic concerns and which develop the narrative strategies to represent the protagonist’s position from alternating vantage points. In these opening paragraphs, the female protagonist is presented through her reflections on her position in the cage and on the effect of her position on her interpersonal relationships. She is represented as remarkably aware of the strangeness and sadness of her encasement in her mechanical occupation in the first paragraph and attuned to her surroundings—both physical and social. Then, surprisingly, in the second paragraph her engagement to Mr. Mudge is

presented in such a roundabout and strange way, as a connexion “to which she had lent herself with ridiculous inconsequence,” to make her seem both intensely aware of the awkwardness and undesirability of her position and completely passive and powerless to change it (314). Her relationship to Mr. Mudge is introduced by way of the narrator’s explanation of her lack of relation with the other grocery clerks: “She recognised the others the less because she had at last so unreservedly, so irredeemably, recognised Mr. Mudge” (314). While the narrator’s “unreservedly” and “irredeemably” seem to imply some sort of sordid “fall” into passion, it seems that her relationship with Mr. Mudge is more characterized by indifference and even boredom: she is somewhat “ashamed” by her feelings of “luxury” when he moves to a different grocery store, a move she calls “the corrected awkwardness” of not having to have him “in her eyes” all day and that leaves “something a little fresh for them [her eyes] to rest on of a Sunday”(315). Indeed, she was so uninspired by having him “in her eyes” daily that she “often asked herself what it was marriage would be able to add to a familiarity that seemed already to have scraped the platter so clear” (315). The narrative at this moment seems to be thoroughly shaped by her thoughts and even her phrasing as the narrator refers to her phrases for things (i.e. “corrected awkwardness”) and to this question that she asked herself. And yet the narrative maintains a partial distance from “her” caged point of view: by insisting that some things echo the telegraphist’s speech, the narrative highlights that all of the moments are not voiced by her and indeed underlining the mediated quality of the narrative presentation refracted through the third-person omniscient narrator.

In the opening section, the “position” of the telegraphist is presented through three paragraphs all opening out onto a different facet of both her relative powerlessness

and victimization and her proliferating observations and judgments about her surroundings, her relationships, and her own feelings.³⁰ The third paragraph introduces more context about her future and her past—beginning by mentioning Mr. Mudge’s plans for her transfer to an office and a neighborhood nearer to himself and ending with an account of “the early times of their great misery” when her mother and elder sister and herself had been “as conscious and incredulous ladies, suddenly bereft, betrayed, overwhelmed, they had slipped faster and faster down the steep slope at the bottom of which she alone had rebounded” (315). Because of the co-presence of references to the past, to the future and to the telegraphist’s current thinking about the present, past and future the sense of the time in this opening section of the story is somewhat confused and overlaid. The telegraphist is trapped in a routinized job that is unvarying and feels endless – and in a relationship with Mudge which likewise seems repetitive (he’s always seeing her on Sundays and “again” writing to her about the transfer because he “could never drop a subject”) (315). Both her job and her emotional connections to Mudge and to her sad past are figured as “wearing” on her – her arm gets worn down by rubbing on the shelf in her cage and her mind is worn down by Mudge’s re-iterated request although “it [Mudge’s refusal to drop a subject] didn’t wear as things *had* worn, the worries of the early times of their great misery” (315). Strangely, James begins his story in a state of temporal confusion and seemingly repetitive actions and emotions producing a sense of stasis and of wearing.

This sense of wearing stasis is reflected both in the descriptions of the telegraphist’s experiences and in James’s decision to begin his story without an immediate action or catalyst; rather than beginning at a potentially key point in time, a

turning point beginning a change, the story rather emphasizes the lack of such moments in the telegraphist's daily routine ("It was always rather quiet at Cocker's while the contingent from Ladle's and Thrupp's and all the other great places were at luncheon"(316)).³¹ Indeed, the telegraphist is only able to endure the stasis by reading her "novels, very greasy, in fine print and all about fine folks, at a ha'penny a day" or alternatively by "expan[ding] her consciousness" in the imagining romantic narratives about her customers (316-317). Importantly, the protagonist and the narrator continually conflate her imaginative leaps about her customers with her consumption of these "greasy" novels. The telegraphist often imagines her own authoring practices as trumping those that she consumes through the circulating library; later in the story, "she" worries and fantasizes about the dangers she imagines for her couple: "He perhaps didn't even himself know how scared he was; but *she* knew. They were in danger, they were in danger, Captain Everard and Lady Bradeen: it beat every novel in the shop" (340). In passages like this, James links the telegraphist's imaginative labors generated by the circulation of telegrams through her shop to her consumption of literary texts through the ha'penny circulating libraries and indeed through these linkages James draws attention to the material forms and underscores the social and economic costs of each form of print culture.

Both the telegram and the ha'penny novel are remarkable in their being about the rich—"in fine print and all about fine folks"—and their being consumed and processed by the working classes for a price: the novels cost a ha'penny a day and the telegraphic fantasies are psychically expensive as they require the telegraphist's caging and her frequent recognition of the economic imbalances between herself and the "characters" in

her authorial constructions. The telegraphist is elated by her fantasies about some sort of special communion with her clientele—particularly with Captain Everard—and yet despite her imagining of their connections, she is continually reminded of the huge socio-economic gulf between them: “What twisted the knife in her vitals was the way the profligate rich scattered about them, in extravagant chatter over their extravagant pleasures and sins, an amount of money that would have held the stricken household of her frightened childhood, her poor pinched mother and tormented father and lost brother and starved sister, together for a lifetime. During her first weeks she had often gasped at the sums people were willing to pay for the stuff they transmitted – the ‘much love’s, the ‘awful’ regrets, the compliments and wonderments and vain vague gestures that cost the price of a new pair of boots” (324). In passages like this, James’s emphasizes the ways in which the telegraphist’s occupation as word-counter and change-maker constantly reminds her of the huge and frivolous “cost” of the telegraphic medium of communication. Indeed, at times these reminders rankle the soul of the protagonist and her fantasies about the rich turn to anger and bitterness over their “extravagant chatter.”

During her second encounter with Everard the telegraphist experiences a similar disgust over his thoughtless extravagance: she describes him as “[belonging] supremely to the class that wired everything, even their expensive feelings (so that, as he evidently never wrote, his correspondence cost him weekly pounds and pounds and he might be in and out five times a day)” (321). While the telegrams allow her to “make free” intellectually in the “expansion of her consciousness” through her narrative fantasies about Everard and his lover and about Everard and herself, the material form of the telegram and its cost per word continually interrupt and sour these fantasies of power and

communion as she is reminded of the very great socio-economic difference between herself and her “characters.” Throughout the story, the telegraphist vacillates between assertions of her superior mental faculties and the power she gains through her occupation as the processor of the messages of the very rich—“She quite thrilled herself with thinking what, with such a lot of material, a bad girl would do. It would be a scene better than many in her ha’penny novels” (339)—and her realizations of her lack of any real power to change her economic situation and to improve her class status, to really recover the social position she lost when her family fell to “the great misery” described in the opening pages.

The practice of telegraphic communication enables the telegraphist’s fantasies of power and authorship as she uses her position to “hold” her clients and their messages.³² Her “mean function” of counting out their words allows her to read their messages and attempt to crack their codes of communication and retain their meanings: she takes their messages and “tracked and stored up against them till she had at moments, in private, a triumphant vicious feeling of mastery and ease, a sense of carrying their silly guilty secrets in her pocket, her small retentive brain” (324). In addition to storing up their messages in her remarkable mind, the telegraphist also imagines herself as controlling the situation during her face-to-face encounters by refusing to put the stamps on for them and by asserting her power and control of the situation at key moments in the story’s plot: she completely unnerves Lady Bradeen when she shows her deep understanding of the lover’s secret telegraphic code by correcting the false address in her message and at the climax of the story she persistently withholds her knowledge from Everard at his moment

of crisis and momentarily puts on the attitude of an incompetent and unfeeling “Paddington” telegraphist to toy with him and to demonstrate her mastery and dominance in their exchange.

The narrative strategies that distance the narrator (and the reader) from the protagonist and alternate between internal and external views of the telegraphist continually undercut the reader’s certainty about the accuracy of the telegraphist’s authoring fantasies and self-assessment of her power—many of her internally developed fantastic imaginings are proven false or exaggerated in the course of external presentation of the plot. And yet, despite these suggestions that her pride in her abilities is at times unfounded, in the end the telegraphist’s powerful knowledge is justified through her mastery of the medium of telegraphy: she cracks the code of the lover’s secret system of telegraphy—knowing that Lady Bradeen should write Cooper’s instead of Burfield’s (343)—and proves her almost unimaginable powers of retention when much later she remembers the exact message that was wired on that occasion (372). When discussing her following all the glamorous happenings in the social life of the elite in London and particularly of her couple, the narrative explains her position with a confusing metaphor—implying her position as a sort of reader/author/weaver/decipherer: “Most of the elements swam straight away, lost themselves in the bottomless common, and by so doing really kept the page clear. On the clearness therefore what she did retain stood sharply out; she nipped and caught it, turned it over and interwove it” (326). The formal economies of the story create a tension between the protagonist’s desires to be like an author constructing romances to rival her ha’penny novels and her more passive and seemingly impotent status as merely a reader or recorder providing “the running

commentary of a witness so exclusively a witness” (323). In 1898, James builds from his experiences translating texts for the stage and dictating his words to a stenographer to experiment with the telegraphic form and the socio-economic network of telegraphic communication in order to think about the uneven power and social relations between sender and transmitter/receiver (in the story the telegraphist fills both roles), between author and reader. Ultimately, James places telegrams at the center of *In the Cage*'s thematic concerns and formal economies to explore the power dynamics involved in the material production and social construction of texts.

Henry James's Telegraphic Imagination in *The Golden Bowl*

Even after his extensive exploration of the cultural world of the telegraphist, his investigation of the socio-economic structure of the telegraphic network, and his play with the formal properties of telegrams and his own prose in 1898 with *In the Cage*, Henry James had not exhausted his interest in telegrams and their functions in his fiction. He continued to experiment with telegrams in his late novels and he significantly incorporated numerous telegrams at key moments in *The Golden Bowl*. As late as 1904, the telegram continued to fascinate James and continued to be relevant and useful in his experiments in his fiction and his formal constructions. Telegrams are central to the development of the plot in *The Golden Bowl*—they are used as summonses, as private pacts, as encouragements, as announcements that pertain to key happenings in the text and that produce action on the part of the small cast of interconnected characters. While certainly effective as movers of the “action” of the novel, telegrams are also used by James as touchstones and occasions to develop the more internalized “action” of the

thoughts of characters and particularly to dramatize moments of disconnect or discord in key relationships in the text. Telegrams mediate between characters and often the text uses moments where telegrams are interpreted and parsed in order to emphasize disjunctions between characters and failings of mutual understanding. In the world of *The Golden Bowl*, telegrams most often lead to revelations of misunderstanding, miscommunication, and imbalances of power that arise from these failures of characters to, as James would say, “meet” one another over the meaning of the missives.

In every major relationship between the major players in the text telegrams are used to emphasize encounters that dramatize the differences and disconnects in their relation. Indeed, in *The Golden Bowl* telegrams—as terse, compressed lines of text both revealing and veiling multiple ambiguous possible readings—function as formal mechanisms for playing out those differences and for putting the characters into the roles of authors and readers of these internal texts. Telegrams are vehicles of print culture through which the relations between author, recipient, and audience (the reader of the novel and often additional internal readers (i.e. not the stated addressee)) are dramatized and framed. James uses telegrams to question these positions—and their relative ethics, intentions, and possible powers—as his characters question each other about the words of the telegrams and about the positions and relations that those words imply, codify, and render visible (or more often threateningly ambiguous). In *The Golden Bowl*, each key relation between the “party of six” is at some point negotiated through telegraphy: the Prince receives a telegram from his “backers” to approve his marriage to Maggie; Colonel Bob Assingham edits Fanny Assingham’s telegrams (and her thoughts as though they were also priced by the word); Maggie telegraphs her father to congratulate him

upon his engagement to Charlotte; Amerigo wires Charlotte a resonant and cryptic message on the eve of her marriage to Adam; at the climax of their affair the Prince and Charlotte communicate “telegraphically” at Matcham; Maggie summons Fanny with a telegraphic message after her encounter with the merchant over the golden bowl³³; and finally, Charlotte wires to Maggie and Amerigo to announce the final meeting before she and Adam ship off to American City. While the metaphorically “telegraphic” communication between the Prince and Charlotte about their affair at Matcham serves to solidify their relationship and their mutual understanding as not requiring words or explanation, most of these telegraphic exchanges—and indeed all of those featuring physical telegrams rather than metaphoric allusions—function by emphasizing the gaps in understanding and communion between the characters.³⁴

While by 1904 telegrams were very much a somewhat mundane and unremarkable aspect of life in modernity, their repeated prominence as mediating forces in *The Golden Bowl* speaks to their usefulness to James in his construction and disruption of the relationships between the central characters. Telegrams may be a fact of life for the characters, but the telegrams that stand out and become crucial to the development of the text are very much treated as remarkable occurrences in the fabric of the human relations between the characters. Indeed it is perhaps the very unremarkableness of sending telegrams—as a matter of course in the lives of these privileged and oft-globe-trotting characters—that highlights the significance of the few telegrams which become crucially important at turning points in their lives. Telegrams are key elements in the text which contribute to the mapping of these relationships and to the characters learning to, as they might say, “see where they are.” Sharon Cameron has argued that *The Golden*

Bowl “sets forth successive, competing models for communication, as if it were deliberating in a rigorous way how communication should work.”³⁵ While Cameron sees these competing models as speaking and thinking—she argues that in the shift from the first half to the second half of the novel, “meaning placed in speech cedes to meaning placed in thought”³⁶—I argue that the material forms of telegrams complicate the novel’s investigation of how “communication” works and that telegrams are indispensable to James’s experiments with narrative techniques to show the imbalances in power and knowledge between his characters. Telegrams resist Cameron’s reading of the novel’s structure as setting forth a linear progression wherein meaning gets transferred from speaking to thinking—as they continue to punctuate the novel’s major exchanges from beginning to end and as they generate meaning in writing, speech, and thoughts and as they draw attention to the formal mechanisms through which James represents the divergences in his characters’ responses to the telegraphic messages.

While the experience of sending and receiving telegrams may have been a common practice in the historical milieu of the characters, in *The Golden Bowl* the telegrams that are singled out for attention are notable in their disruptive capacities. James uses the telegram as a form of modern print culture that opens his text and his characters to questions about the relations between recipient and sender, reader and writer, authorial audience (i.e. external readers of the novel) and characters. James is interested in how these relations are constructed—and disrupted—through exchanges of these missives of print culture. The exchange of telegrams at times allows and at times compels his characters to negotiate the complex networks of knowledge and power grounding their relationships with one another. *The Golden Bowl*’s incorporation of

telegrams to mediate key relations and to motivate key textual moments shows James's reworking of the form of the telegram to function centrally in his fictional experiments within the novel.

The second chapter of the novel begins with the Prince discussing his position on the verge of the marriage and in the first sentence of the chapter the Prince mentions a "telegram from his backers" as part of the package of documents and signs which seal his fate as a married man: "'They're not good days, you know,' he had said to Fanny Assingham after declaring himself grateful for finding her, and then, with his cup of tea, putting her in possession of the latest news – the documents signed an hour ago, *de part et d'autre*, and the telegram from his backers, who had reached Paris the morning before, and who, pausing there a little, poor dears, seemed to think the whole thing a tremendous lark" (58). In this passage, the telegram functions as part of the list of "latest news" that the Prince shares with Fanny over tea and which serves as one part of what the Prince refers to as "all those solemn signatures of an hour ago that brings the case home to [him]" (58). While the telegram is not really one of these signed and sealed documents that legalize the marriage brokering – the description of its senders as "his backers" and the connection of the telegram's arrival with the signing links the telegram to the other printed materials which make his marriage feel like an impending reality for Amerigo.

Here, the novel's first telegram interestingly refuses any specificity of message except the hint that it somehow contained news of his backers, the "*sposi*" or his sister and his brother-in-law, from Paris and that it somehow implies their view "of the whole thing" as "a tremendous lark." By leaving the question of what the telegram actually says vague, the text emphasizes the function of the telegram—as somehow participating in the

ratification of the Prince's marriage, as part of the facts that make his marriage a solid and rapidly approaching fact and that make these days "not good" for him—rather than its content. The telegram here sets the stage for the marriage of Maggie and the Prince and announces the arrival of the assets that the Prince brings to the bargaining table over which the marriage is sealed. While Maggie has her father's banknotes to bring to the union, the telegram shows Amerigo's difference from her as he brings a different sort of document to vouch for him—a telegram from his illustrious family (a link to the dusty volumes cataloging their histories in the British Museum).

Not long after this initial appearance of the telegram, James's text invokes the telegraphic medium again to describe the inner workings of the Assinghams' connubial bond. In the midst of explaining Bob's measured reaction to Fanny's ceaseless waves of thought, the narrator compares Bob's responses to his wife's spoken words to his economical editing of her telegrams: "He could deal with things perfectly, for all his needs, without getting near them. This was the way he dealt with his wife, a large proportion of whose meanings he knew he could neglect. He edited for their general economy the play of her mind, just as he edited, savingly, with the stump of a pencil, her redundant telegrams" (87). Interestingly, here "economy" and "savingly" become double-edged as they quite literally refer to the cost of the telegrams and metaphorically refer to the harmony of their marriage and the potential "costs" caused by her unedited play of mind. Here telegrams emphasize the differences in the ways in which Fanny and Bob Assingham think and communicate; Bob likes to keep things at a distance and "neglect" meanings, while Fanny likes to keep pulling at the threads of possible meanings and to continually question and multiply them. James uses the telegram both figuratively

and actually to mediate their exchange of thoughts and words and as an integral symbol of their interpersonal dynamic. These early references set up the importance of telegrams to the novel as a whole—both as figures of actual bonds and transactions between people and as symbolic of incommensurate relations between different types of people.

The first extended telegraphic encounter occurs upon the advent of Adam Verver's marriage to Charlotte Stant when two significant telegrams are exchanged and interpreted. After he initially proposes to Charlotte in Brighton—a momentous act imagined by Adam as a burning of his ships—Charlotte defers answering him until they can ascertain Maggie's view of the match. In response to Charlotte's request, Mr. Verver writes to his daughter almost immediately and she responds with a telegram from Rome which reaches her father and his prospective fiancé in Paris. Adam then shares this missive with Charlotte and they have an extended encounter over the interpretation of Maggie's telegraphic message:

She looked at him hard a moment when he handed her his telegram, and the look, for what he fancied a dim shy fear in it, gave him perhaps his best moment of conviction that – as a man, so to speak – he properly pleased her. He said nothing – the words sufficiently did it for him, doing it again better still as Charlotte, who had left her chair at his approach, murmured them out. 'We start to-night to bring you all our love and joy and sympathy.' There they were, the words, and what did she want more? She didn't however as she gave him back the little unfolded leaf say they were enough – though he saw the next moment that her silence was probably not disconnected from her having just visibly turned pale. Her extraordinarily fine eyes, as it was his present theory that he had always thought them, shone at him the more darkly out of this change of colour; and she had again with it her apparent way of subjecting herself, for explicit honesty and through her willingness to face him, to any view he might take, all at his ease, and even to wantonness, of the condition he produced in her. (202)

This passage overlays Charlotte's reading of Maggie's telegram (which the text only allows the reader to glimpse as an external response) with Adam's reading of her

emotions through her physical appearance. The thirteen almost mundane words of Maggie's telegram—reported through Charlotte's "murmur" of them—stand in for Adam and in his mind the words "do it better still" as they are colored by her voice. This passage is perhaps most notable in its emphasis on Adam's point of view and its subtle under-cutting of his romanticized view of the situation. The text refuses to show anything but Adam's rosy view of Charlotte's exterior frontage, but the way that Adam's thoughts carry him away to unconvincing conclusions belie his distorted—perhaps, at times in this passage, even deluded—perspective. Beginning with the hint that Adam's interpretation of her "hard look" upon being handed the telegram is merely his "fancied" reading of her expression, the passage uses the couple's exchange over the telegram to emphasize Adam's complete lack of access to Charlotte's thoughts. All that he has to go on are her echoing murmur of the telegram, her initial hard look, and her final pale silence. Yet even from these clues, the text alerts the reader (who has, by this point in the novel, been offered a more penetrating view of Charlotte and her past than Adam has) to Adam's biases and his tendency to misread even to "wantonness" by taking the view of her which most pleases him and which has the most to do with his ideas about the "condition he produced in her" and about his "pleasing" her as a man.

While, for Adam, the words of the telegram should clearly and quickly convince Charlotte of Maggie's approval and end the period of his anticipation of her acceptance, Charlotte's different response to the telegram is hinted at even in the passage's use of free indirect discourse to represent his impatient questioning of what more she might want: "There they were, the words, and what did she want more?" Through the use of free indirect discourse here—in the passage as a whole and particularly directly in this

instance of Adam's frustrated attempts to understand what she might want—emphasizes Adam's desire to control the situation and to function as a stand-in authorial presence or narrator of the scene who could interpret all of Charlotte's looks and actions for the reader (and for himself) to conform with his wishes. And yet the technique of the free indirect discourse also undercuts this assumed authorial position and the details and facts which he interprets stand apart as "facts" which are not adequately explained by his emotional responses. Indeed, his increasing frustration—shown by his exasperated plea that the words of the telegram *should* be enough for her—implies that even he is not entirely soothed by the undeniable facts of the encounter. There could be no doubting that for Charlotte the words are not simply enough and that, despite his inability to comprehend how she could want any other assurance, she persists in wanting more. She does not respond as he would hope by saying that the words "were enough": "She didn't however as she gave him back the little unfolded leaf say they were enough." The narrative technique here allows the reader to view the scene from Adam's emotionally tinged perspective and also to view it dispassionately in terms of the few facts we have—including the words and the physical fact of the telegram itself—that stand outside of his description as real events in the fictional world and which subtly contradict his interpretive gestures. Here, the telegram that he desires to bring himself and Charlotte together actually emphasizes their disconnection and the telegram—combined with James's use of narrative techniques—underscores his inability to penetrate beyond her surface appearances.

As Adam's thoughts progress, he continues to try to author and to interpret her reactions and to explain her silences and paleness as somehow favorable to his own

wishes and as confirming his hopes that she wants to marry him: “As soon as he saw how emotion kept her soundless he knew himself deeply touched, since it proved that, little as she professed, she had been beautifully hoping. They stood there a minute while he took in from this sign that, yes then, certainly she liked him enough – liked him enough to make him, old as he was ready to brand himself, flush for the pleasure of it” (202). Here, the narrator again uses free indirect discourse to echo Adam’s thoughts and his understated brand of romanticizing language—“beautifully hoping” and “certainly she liked him enough”—and describes his strong emotional and physical response in his pleasurable flush. As the exchange between Adam and Charlotte over Maggie’s telegraphic missive further develops, the narrative juxtaposes free indirect discourse reflecting Adam’s emotionally colored responses to the scene and Charlotte’s words and gestures through reported dialogue which again emphasizes their divergent interpretations of the telegram:

The pleasure of it accordingly made him speak first. “Do you begin a little to be satisfied?” Still, oh still a little, she had to think. “We’ve hurried them you see. Why so breathless a start?” “Because they want to congratulate us. They want,” said Adam Verver, “to *see* our happiness.” She wondered again – and this time also, for him, as publicly as possible. “So much as that?” “Do you think it’s too much?” She continued to think plainly. “They weren’t to have started for another week.” “Well, what then? Isn’t our situation worth the little sacrifice? We’ll go back to Rome as soon as you like *with* them.” This seemed to hold her [...] “Worth it, the little sacrifice, for whom? For us, naturally – yes,” she said. “We want to see them – for our reasons. That is,” she rather dimly smiled, “*you* do.” (202-203).

This passage throws Adam’s “pleasure” into sharp relief against Charlotte’s resistant reading of the telegram as not only unsatisfying, but also as confusing and even as a sign of disapproval from Maggie. The words exchanged between the two almost-engaged parties here dramatize their differing reactions to Maggie’s few telegraphed words and

Charlotte's italicized distinction between "we" and "*you*" underscores the telegram's function in bringing out the differences between their interpretations, readings, and, here, their "wants." While Adam cannot immediately understand why and how Charlotte's "wants" should exceed the confirmation he sees offered by the telegram, Charlotte is unconvinced by the words of the document and instead looks behind them to try to puzzle out the truth of what they don't say—she puzzles over the deeper implications encoded into the little scrap of print culture and implied by the other couple's hasty, "breathless" start and later by the fact that the message is only addressed to Adam.

Importantly, later in the exchange, the material form of the telegram takes on prominence as the scrap of print culture is described and passed back and forth between Adam and Charlotte. Charlotte asks Adam to "see" the telegram again and upon her re-reading, she articulates her opinion that the message could be a veil or shield for the true motives of Maggie: "'Let me,' she abruptly said, 'see it again' – taking from him the folded leaf that she had given back and he had kept in his hand. 'Isn't the whole thing,' she asked when she had read it over, 'perhaps but a way like another for their gaining time?'" (203). The word "abruptly" illustrates the unexpectedness of her request and indeed registers that her request to re-read such an apparently transparent message from Maggie momentarily jars Adam's comfortable belief in his correct reading of his future mate and of the message itself. Her question here produces an uncomfortable and unusually "disconcerted" response from Adam before he is able to buoy himself back up to his usual good spirits and rosy outlook.³⁷ Interestingly, the actual physical presence of the telegram as part of the scene seems important as a grounding mechanism for the internal and external movement involved in the exchange. Indeed, the few words on the

“folded leaf” seem to anchor the scene as the conversation takes long sweeps away from it and then ultimately, like Adam in his walk to and from Charlotte and the telegram, return back to the message itself, which has always been present and visible or palpable to the two of them—kept in Adam’s “hand.” The material presence of the telegram seems to make the words it communicate more concrete and unavoidably between them—in a similar way to the way in which Maggie later views the golden bowl itself as a material object which communicates for itself an important and unavoidable meaning and history. The telegram here almost comes to stand in for Maggie (and by extension the Prince) and for all of their possible unspoken objections which form a barrier obstructing the clear relation and communication between Adam and Charlotte.

The exchange between Adam and Charlotte and their mutual “meeting” over their disparate readings of the telegraphic message again emphasizes the differences in their approaches: while Adam continually tries to revert to an easily pleased and happy view of the situation—ready to easily accept the words on the “folded leaf” as completely genuine and unambiguous, Charlotte insistently probes beneath the surface to try to uncover what the words hide, refusing to take them at face value. Charlotte picks up on Maggie’s wiring only to her father as a sign that the telegram hides more than it reveals: “‘You haven’t noticed for yourself, but I can’t quite help noticing, that in spite of what you assume – *we* assume, if you like – Maggie wires her joy only to you. She makes no sign of its overflow to me.’ It was a point – and, staring a moment, he took account of it. But he had, as before, his presence of mind – to say nothing of his kindly humour. ‘Why you complain of the very thing that’s most charmingly conclusive! She treats us already as *one*.’ Clearly now for the girl, in spite of lucidity and logic, there was something in

the way he said things – !” (205). This passage emphasizes the ways in which James uses telegraphic forms in *The Golden Bowl*: he exploits the telegram’s openness to multiple interpretations—and its complex negotiations and constructions of sender/author and addressee/reader—to underscore and to develop the differences and disjunctions at the core of the relations between key characters. Here, the telegram creates an opportunity for this back and forth between prospective husband and wife which provides the most close-up and intimate view of their relation that the novel offers to the external reader—the closest view we get of their relation is an exchange enabled by and mediated by Maggie’s telegram which emphasizes their different approaches to human communication and relationships.

Occasioned by Maggie’s telegram from Rome, the exchange between Charlotte and Adam strangely develops to incorporate Adam’s conception of a hypothetical telegraphic exchange between Charlotte and Amerigo and then unexpectedly concludes with the actual arrival of a telegram from the Prince to Charlotte. At this crucial moment in the novel—on the cusp of the marriage that so alters the relationships between the four major characters—telegrams function as an absolutely central part of the internal and external action of the novel. The exchange of these real and hypothetical telegrams enables the negotiation and the construction of Adam and Charlotte’s marriage. After Charlotte’s observation that Maggie did not wire to her, but only to Adam, he responds by jokingly implying that she wants to their pending marriage approved by the Prince himself in writing:

“I see what’s the matter with you. You won’t be quiet till you’ve heard from the Prince himself. I think,” the happy man added, “that I’ll go and secretly wire to him that you’d like, reply paid, a few words for yourself.” It could apparently but encourage her further to smile. “Reply paid for him,

you mean – or for me?” “Oh I’ll pay with pleasure anything back for you – as many words as you like.” And he went on, to keep it up. “Not requiring either to see your message.” She could take it, visibly, as he meant it. “Should you require to see the Prince’s?” “Not a bit. You can keep that also to yourself.” On his speaking however as if his transmitting the hint were a real question, she appeared to consider – and almost as for good taste – that the joke had gone far enough. “It doesn’t matter. Unless he speaks of his own movement –! And why should it be,’ she asked, ‘a thing that *would* occur to him?” (205-206)

Here the dialogue between the couple interestingly takes a turn toward a series of hypothetical “secret” wirings and emphasizes telegrams as commercial exchanges, priced by the word. Adam’s generous offer of paying for all of these expensive transactions—and of allowing them to remain private—emphasizes his wealth and his complete lack of suspicion as to why Charlotte should want to hear from the Prince at all and what they could possibly have to wire to one another at such a moment. Indeed, although the “joke” on his side is benign and mainly meant to emphasize how much money and energy he is willing and even eager to expend in order to secure her hand in marriage—as well as signaling his unstinting blind trust in her—for Charlotte the “joke had gone far enough” and does speak to her real (although entirely obscure to Adam) desires for just such an exchange with Amerigo before she accepts the proposal. Charlotte and Adam’s conversation about the fictional telegrams emphasizes the disparities in their degrees of wealth and power and, for the reader, emphasizes the disjunction between their perspectives on their pending marriage and on what such messages might mean, contain, and “cost.”

As Charlotte drops the joke on the note of doubting whether “such a thing” as a telegram to her would occur to Amerigo, she and Adam get ready to leave for breakfast only to be interrupted in their departure by the arrival of the very message they had

jokingly imagined. Interestingly in this passage, the novel incorporates the machinery of transporting telegrams and indeed the network of telegraph “emissaries” who convey the expensive messages: “She was ready for their adjournment, but she was also aware of a pedestrian youth in uniform, a visible emissary of the Postes et Telegraphes, who had approached, from the street, the small stronghold of the concierge and who presented there a missive taken from the little cartridge-box slung over his shoulder. The portress, meeting him on the threshold, met equally, across the court, Charlotte’s marked attention to his visit, so that within in the minute she had advanced to our friends with her cap-streamers flying and her smile of announcement as ample as her broad white apron. She raised aloft a telegraphic message and as she delivered it sociably discriminated. ‘Cette fois-ci pour madame!’ – with which she as genially retreated, leaving Charlotte in possession” (208). The appearance of this “visible emissary” of the Parisian system of telegraphic print culture—marked by his uniform and his “little cartridge-box”—arrests Charlotte’s gaze and makes the receipt of the telegram a very official and public event, announced by both the visibility of his duty and by the amusingly dramatic response of the portress.

The very publicity of the event emphasizes the visibility and lack of privacy afforded by the telegraphic network here—obviously Adam is aware of the transaction as is the portress and any onlookers who might be there—and also contrasts with the privacy of the message itself which is not revealed to Adam at all and not even to the reader until many chapters later in the novel. The external actions of Charlotte’s receipt and perusal of the telegram are described by the text, but her internal response is left opaque to both Adam and to the reader: “Charlotte, taking it, held it at first unopened. Her eyes had

come back to her companion, who had immediately and triumphantly greeted it. ‘Ah there you are!’ She broke the envelope then in silence, and for a minute, as with the message he himself had put before her, studied its contents without a sign” (208). The text stresses the inaccessibility of Charlotte to Adam’s gaze here and again by using free indirect discourse the novel uses this moment of Adam’s frustrated access to develop his own fancied reading of her expressions and of the situation:

He watched her without a question and at last she looked up. ‘I’ll give you,’ she simply said, ‘what you ask.’ The expression of her face was strange – but since when had a woman’s at moments of supreme surrender not a right to be? He took it in with his own long look and his grateful silence – so that nothing more for some instants passed between them. Their understanding sealed itself -- the already felt that she had made him right. But he was in presence too of the fact that Maggie had made *her* so; and always therefore without Maggie where in fine would he be? She united them, brought them together as with the click of a silver spring, so that on the spot, with the vision of it, his eyes filled, Charlotte facing him meanwhile with her expression made still stranger by the blur of his gratitude. Quite through it withal he smiled. ‘What my child does for me --!’ Through it all as well, that is still through the blur, he saw Charlotte, rather than heard her, reply. ‘It isn’t Maggie. It’s the Prince.’ ‘I *say!*’ – he gaily rang out. ‘Then it’s best of all.’ ‘It’s enough.’ ‘Thank you for thinking so!’ To which he added: ‘It’s enough for our question, but it isn’t – is it? – quite enough for our breakfast? Dejeunons.’” (208-209).

In this passage, the text narrates Adam’s flight of fancy and his emotional response to his false assumption that the telegram is from Maggie and that he owes his marital happiness and Charlotte’s “supreme surrender” to his daughter’s action—the text here again emphasizes its use of free indirect discourse and its plunging into Adam’s fancies contrasts markedly with its complete lack of access to Charlotte’s own inward response. The telegram functions here not only to highlight the differences between the two characters but also to underscore their different treatments by the narrative strategies of the text; James uses the form of the telegram and his characters’ interactions around these

vessels of print culture to experiment with his own formal techniques for constructing readerly knowledge and for shading the relations of his characters with one another.

While the text develops Adam's theory as to what has happened and his overflowing affective response to what he imagines Maggie "does" for him, the reader also believes that the telegram might be from Maggie—not being given any information to contradict this at the time. Thus, Charlotte's correction of this assumption surprises the reader, as well as Adam, and makes the absence of any information about the contents of such a message even more tantalizing as it is withheld from our knowledge and as it is momentarily suspended outside the realm of narrative omniscience and access. This narrative withholding creates a readerly desire for knowledge about the missive which the novel plays with in Charlotte's offer to let Adam read it:

She stood there however in spite of this appeal, her document always before them. 'Don't you want to read it?' He thought. 'Not if it satisfies you. I don't require it.' But she gave him, as for her conscience, another chance. 'You can if you like.' He hesitated afresh, but as for amiability, not for curiosity. 'Is it funny.' Thus, finally, she again dropped her eyes on it, drawing in her lips a little. 'No – I call it grave.' 'Ah then I don't want it.' 'Very grave,' said Charlotte Stant. 'Well, what did I tell you of him?' he asked, rejoicing, as they started: a question for all answer to which, before she took his arm, the girl thrust her paper crumpled into the pocket of her coat." (209).

The readerly interest in what the telegram might say—heightened by the emphasized lack of readerly access to Charlotte's thoughts through the narrative techniques contrasting the external facts reported about her actions and the long sweeps of free indirect discourse reflecting Adam's inward flights of imagination—renders Adam's lack of interest in the telegram's contents strange and somewhat naively trusting here. Narrative techniques and the telegram work together in this crucial narrative turning point—the moment of her acceptance forms the end of "Book II" of the first volume of the novel, after which the

novel leaps forward “a couple of years” (213)—to create a strong readerly interest in the concealed message and a suspense as to what might occur if he should read it. Again, the physical form of the telegram is emphasized as Charlotte takes the message and “thrust[s] her paper crumpled” into her pocket. Interestingly, here the stress on the materiality of the message seems to allow for James to express Charlotte’s emotional response—here perhaps anger indicated by her violent treatment of the paper—and her gesture of keeping the message in her pocket foreshadows the later description of her frequent re-reading of the saved crumpled sheet.

Throughout this extended scene—about eight pages of dialogue and narrative are generated by two brief telegrams and a series of imagined ones—the telegram functions as a catalyst for Charlotte and Adam’s conversations and for the narrative techniques which reveal and complicate their relation with one another and which pique readerly interest in their dynamic. The telegram here functions as both as a model for the formal strategies of the novel and as a sort of anti-model: while the telegrams themselves contain only a few words which are brief and cryptic (the anti-model to James’s expansive literary style), the conversations that they occasion and the exchanges and human relationships that they mediate are endless, deep and expansively circling in wide rings. The clipped telegraphic messages generate long exchanges surrounding, sounding, and questioning a few lines of text—and the long arcs of thought and consciousness continually return to the hard, solid facts of the telegrams (a material fact present on the scene made visually present in the hands of the characters, crumpled in a pocket, and signaled by the uniformed emissary) as grounding and generative nodes. This extended scene shows the ways in which James is thinking through his formal technique and its

revelatory abilities by experimenting with the telegram as a source for formal maneuvering and for generating internal and external action. He uses the telegram as a mechanism to create moments and conversations that complicate and develop the nuanced human interactions and relationships between his characters. More specifically, telegrams function by pointing out the gaps between his characters and the discrepancies between their expectations for and of one another. Telegrams also allow James to explore and to exploit the reader's position of judgment and expectation and to heighten readerly desires for knowledge through the overlaying of the telegraphic messages with narrative techniques. Additionally, the material forms and histories of telegraphic messages allow James to think through the economics and the visibility of this particular medium of print culture; he links his formal stylistics to these scraps of modern communication and through them explores the power relations between sender and receiver and between author and reader.

The narrative jumps ahead in time immediately following this extended telegraphic encounter and takes up the story after Charlotte and Adam's marriage and the reader must wait four chapters for the final revelation of the contents of the Prince's telegram. The belated account of Charlotte's treatment and interpretation of Amerigo's telegram forms one of the only times that the reader is allowed a relatively unobstructed view of Charlotte's consciousness: the passages which narrate her encounter with the telegram show an "unfiltered" version of Charlotte which remains hidden from Adam and even from the Prince. James's narrative account stresses Charlotte's insistence on her private consumption of the telegram and yet the passage narrating her reading

experiences with the missive is the moment in the text when her interiority is most available to the “eyes” of the audience of James’s readers:

That telegram, that acceptance of the prospect proposed to them – an acceptance quite other than perfunctory – she had never destroyed; though reserved for no eyes but her own it was still carefully reserved. She kept it in a safe place – from which, very privately, she sometimes took it out to read it over. “*A la guerre come à la guerre then*” – it had been couched in the French tongue. ‘*We must lead our lives as we see them; but I am charmed with your courage and almost surprised at my own.*’ The message had remained ambiguous; she had read it in more lights than one. (244-45)

Here Charlotte’s internal responses are unmediated by either Adam or Amerigo’s controlling perspectives, which color and often distort her portrayal elsewhere in the narrative. The fact that the Prince and Adam are shut out from the knowledge of this part of her—indeed, the passage highlights the determined privacy of her act of reading, reserving, and preserving—emphasizes the readers’ special communion with Charlotte as we are let in on the secret of her repeated encounters with the telegram. For Charlotte here, the telegram is intensely personal and her careful preservation of it allows her to privately engage in an almost ritualized practice of re-reading, a repetition which nevertheless does not dissipate the ambiguity of the words. Strangely, the construction of the passage sets the receipt of and her multiple readerly responses to the telegram as events in the past, while also casting the telegram as eternally present through the ritually repeated acts of reading. For James then, the telegram can at once function as a fleeting momentary form of communication—a node to generate action and conversation at a particular moment in the development of the novel—and as a text to be read over and over, as a sort of private, timelessly meaningful message whose meanings develop over time and in relation to other messages and contexts. In part, the telegram can work both ways here—as momentary and as enduring—because of the text’s treatment of its

material form and visible mode of delivery. While the telegram at first appears through a network visibly testifying to its immediacy—heralded by the uniformed delivery man and the portress’s flying cap-strings—the crumpled sheet can also be “reserved,” smoothed out, and carefully secreted from pocket to a “safe place” in which it becomes a secret memento, almost like a talisman; the telegram takes on the status of a cherished keepsake to be enjoyed in private and it functions as a substitute for the “gift” that the Prince desired to give her before his own marriage.

Interestingly, the Prince’s message is “couched in the French tongue,” a language choice that the Prince earlier explains to Maggie as his choice for speaking “worse”: “‘When I speak worse, you see, I speak French,’ he had said; intimating thus that there were discriminations, doubtless of the invidious kind, for which that language was the most apt” (45). Whether the French words are indeed the Prince at his “worst” is uncertain; as Patricia Crick notes in her editorial notes to this passage: “Charlotte finds the message ambiguous, and no wonder. Literally, it means that in wartime one must act as in wartime; it may also have the less menacing meaning of ‘We must just take things as we find them.’ It also carries a hint of ‘All’s fair in love and war’” (587). As Crick notes, the choice of French interestingly complicates the message by adding many possible interpretations and shades of meaning. This usage is especially strange since the Prince and Charlotte so often communicate in Italian with one another to express themselves intimately and secretly as they do in the shop containing the golden bowl.

The content of the Prince’s telegram thus separates him from Charlotte—as he rejects their shared language of Italian and creates a distancing ambiguity about his meaning—and stresses the gaps between them in spite of his employment of the shared

pronoun “we” to describe their situations. The use of “we” hearkens back to earlier in the same paragraph when she notes what Amerigo *might* have said if he acted on the impulse: “If her friend had blurted or bungled he would have said, in his simplicity, ‘Did we do “everything to avoid” it when we faced your remarkable marriage?’ – quite handsomely of course using the plural, taking his share of the case, by way of a tribute of memory to the telegram she had received from him in Paris after Mr. Verver had dispatched to Rome the news of their engagement” (244). The conditional tense here interestingly then becomes referential to and appositely linked to the very real, materially recorded and preserved words on the telegram. Indeed, it is this reference to the Prince’s imagined and yet unuttered remark and language that immediately precedes and almost produces the revelation of the actual words of the Prince’s telegram—by leading Charlotte’s train of thought to those other words by the association of the linking plural pronoun “we.”³⁸ The overall effect of these connections emphasizes the unuttered feelings stretching between the couple and although some of these references attempt to stress her understanding of and connection with Amerigo, cumulatively they actually stress that she is shut out from full knowledge of his many shades of meaning, as despite all these contextual clues about his feelings and his irresistible eyes, “the message had remained ambiguous.”

Here James uses the Prince’s telegram to Charlotte to create an unusual break in his novel’s narrative structure and to offer unusual readerly access to and sympathy with Charlotte. This description of her “private” telegraphic encounter is one of the only moments in which the reader is narratively positioned on the side of Charlotte, joining in her effort to make sense of the telegram’s ambiguous language (“*A la guerre come à la*

guerre then”). Here, both Charlotte and the external reader are joined in struggling to make sense of the telegram’s ambiguous language and multiple possible meanings and the narrative focalized through Charlotte goes on to list a series of possible alternative glosses:

The message had remained ambiguous; she had read it in more lights than one; it might mean that even without her his career was up-hill work for him, a daily fighting-matter on behalf of a good appearance, and that thus if they were to become neighbours again the event would compel him to live still more under arms. It might mean on the other hand that he found he was happy enough, and that accordingly, so far as she might imagine herself a danger, she was to think of him as prepared in advance, as really seasoned and secure. (245)

The telegram allows a momentary shift into Charlotte’s position and by placing her as struggling reader rather than as scheming author, the moment adds substantially to the pathos of her situation (with its lack of independence—both psychic and economic). Having no more power and interpretive insight than the external reader, Charlotte is left to wonder and to sort through these various possibilities of what the Prince’s cryptic words might signify without being able to ever discuss these words with him or gain greater purchase on their significance in their relation.

In essence, the passage illuminates Charlotte’s loneliness and her alienation from Amerigo as the narrative creates pathos about her inability to ask him about the telegram which she “reserves” and rereads as a private ritual and about her inability to tell him about her noble offer to allow Adam to see it. The narrative goes on to point out that the Prince doesn’t ever ask about the telegram and that Charlotte never tells him just how expensive those words might have proved if Mr. Verver had wanted to read them.³⁹

On his arrival in Paris with his wife, none the less, she had asked for no explanation, just as he himself hadn’t asked if the document were still in her possession. Such an enquiry, everything implied, was beneath him – just as it was beneath herself to mention to him uninvited that she had

instantly and in perfect honesty offered to show the telegram to Mr. Verver, and that if this companion had but said the word she would immediately have put it before him. She had thereby forborne to call his attention to her consciousness that such an exposure would in all probability at once have dished her marriage; that all her future had in fact for the moment hung by the single hair of Mr. Verver's delicacy (as she supposed they must call it); and that her position in the matter of responsibility was therefore inattackably straight. (245)

Although the text—seemingly voicing Charlotte's thoughts about what "everything implied" through free indirect discourse—claims that "explanation" by either party would be "beneath" them, the phrases "to mention to him uninvited" and "forborne" hint that Charlotte would have liked to share her "consciousness" with him if, indeed, he had offered the opportunity for her to do so. The narrative techniques here—which crystallize the narrative possibilities ushered in by the sending and receipt of the telegram—emphasize the reader's special knowledge of Charlotte's thoughts and privileged view of her unspoken relation to the telegram. Here the free indirect discourse and the word choice betrays her wishes to delve "beneath" their assumed propriety and to speak with him about his message. By revealing her suppressed and unuttered feelings here, the narrative uses Charlotte's encounter with the telegram to illustrate her isolation from the Prince and the imbalance of power in their exchange. Thus, in this one seminal telegram, James both develops an extended scene between Charlotte and Adam in which his formal economies emphasize the disjunct between the affianced pair and later describes Charlotte's "private" encounters with Amerigo's telegram in the above passage which narratively flaunts its momentary access to Charlotte's most private thoughts while emphasizing that this knowledge is shared only with the reader and not with the other characters from whom she remains isolated. In other words, James uses this key telegram

to explore the power relations between his characters and to experiment with his own narrative powers of representing those exchanges.

The final extended telegraphic exchange further develops these functions of the telegram in the novel and here it uses the telegram to represent Maggie's realization of her own coming into power and her growing possession of her husband. The exchange occurs in the penultimate chapter which begins with the announcement of Charlotte's telegram in the first sentence: "A telegram in Charlotte's name arrived early – 'We shall come and ask you for tea at five if convenient to you. Am wiring for the Assinghams to lunch.' This document, into which meanings were to be read, Maggie promptly placed before her husband, adding the remark that her father and his wife, who would have come up the previous night or that morning, had evidently gone to an hotel" (558). Here, the telegram immediately gets partially glossed by Maggie who "places" it before Amerigo with her added deduction that the other pair had "evidently" gone to a hotel—the reader is presented with the message but also with Maggie's partial interpretation of what the message means but does not declare directly.

This telegraphic exchange opens up a long expansive narrative account of Maggie's negotiation of her relation with her husband and the narrative presents the exchange between the two of them over Charlotte's telegram, using free indirect discourse to present the scene and its latent meanings from her point of view. The narrative partakes of Maggie's metaphoric language and shares her imagining of a "visible cloud" on her husband's brow as she approaches him with the message and reflects upon their situation together constructed by her coming to knowledge and power enabled by her earlier acquisition of the bowl and its history:

She had been going about him these three months, she perfectly knew, with a maintained idea – of which she had never spoken to him; but what had at last happened was that his way of looking at her on occasion seemed a perception of the presence not of one idea but of fifty, variously prepared for uses with which he somehow must reckon. She knew herself suddenly, almost strangely glad to be coming to him at this hour with nothing more abstract than a telegram” (558).

Surprisingly, here the telegram comes to stand for something concrete and not as abstract as the infinite number of ideas which he perceives she may be thinking—it stands as something tangible and materially limited that they can “meet” over despite her first impression of the message as a “document, into which meanings were to be read.” In this exchange, Maggie places the telegram between them so that they can come together through the shared labor of interpreting it and responding to it—to give them a chance to meet over an external fact that they can face together.

And yet despite her desires to use the telegram to draw them together, the message at least initially seems to illustrate her lack of access to her husband’s thoughts: “She had begun, a year ago, by asking herself how she could make him think more of her; but what was it after all he was thinking now? He kept his eyes on her telegram, he read it more than once, easy as it was, in spite of its conveyed deprecation, to understand; during which she found herself almost awestruck with yearning, almost on the point of marking somehow as she had marked in the garden at Fawns with Charlotte – that she had truly come unarmed”(559). While Maggie intends to show her harmlessness and “unarmed” state with the telegram, the Prince’s response—his intensely focused reading of the “easy” message and his asking what she wishes him to do with it—suggests that he does feel her power in the situation. Interestingly, as the scene between them develops, the material form of the telegram is again emphasized by the narrative:

He gave her back her paper, asking with it if there was anything in particular

she wished him to do. She stood there with her eyes on him, doubling the telegram together as if it had been a precious thing and yet all the while holding her breath. Of a sudden somehow, and quite as by action of their merely having between them these few written words, an extraordinary fact came up. He was with her as if he were hers, hers in a degree and on a scale, with an intensity and an intimacy, that were a new and a strange quantity, that were like the irruption of a tide loosening them where they had stuck and making them feel they floated. (559-560).

The telegram is physically passed between them and the language used to describe Maggie's physical treatment of the telegram—she “doubles” the telegram together “as if it had been a precious thing”—emphasizes the material presence of the document and the words as connecting them and joining them together. The materiality of the telegram—held in her hands, folded, and palpably part of the scene—creates the “action” which brings the realization that the Prince is “hers.” Her possession of Amerigo is tied here to her possession of these words in the concrete form of the telegram—the telegram sent to her by Charlotte, although clearly in the scene the words are under Maggie's control as “her paper.” This important exchange between the couple is enabled by the physical exchange of the telegram from Charlotte and leads both to Maggie's feelings that they are joined and her feelings of ownership and of proprietary power over him. Thus, for Maggie, here, the telegram both enables their connection and points to the imbalance of power in their relation.

Indeed, she feels the rush of power and ownership over him so much that she momentarily desires to lose control and give some power back to him by giving over to him with a physical movement of submission or desire. Yet the telegram itself—still present as a material object clutched in her hand and on the scene as a material reminder of Charlotte herself, its authoress—holds Maggie back and “saves” her from giving up control of the situation:

What was it that, with the rush of this, just kept her from putting out her hands to him, from catching at him as in the other time, with the superficial impetus he and Charlotte had privately conspired to impart, she had so often, her breath failing her, known the impulse to catch at her father? She did however just yet nothing inconsequent – though she couldn't immediately have said what saved her; and by the time she had neatly folded her telegram she was doing something merely needful. 'I wanted you simply to know – so that you mayn't by accident miss them. For it's the last,' said Maggie. 'The last?' 'I take it as their good-bye.' And she smiled as she could always smile. 'They come in state – to take formal leave. They do everything that's proper. To-morrow,' she said, 'they go to Southampton. (559-560)

She maintains her self-control by clinging to her possession of the “precious” paper of the telegram as a grounding force and by using the words of the telegram to assert her interpretive control over its message and of the situation it bespeaks. Rather than dispel the Prince's “fear of her fifty ideas,” Maggie instead implies her almost omniscient knowledge of the other two in her definitive reading of the message as “the last” and her deduction of their plans and indeed of their intentions (559). At this moment, Maggie's “possession” of the telegram's meanings takes on added significance because of the complex relation of all of the parties involved on the sides of senders and receivers of the message—why does Charlotte telegram instead of Adam—(the discrimination “in Charlotte's name” emphasizes her role as sender)? Is the message addressed just to Maggie or to Amerigo as well? Yet while the telegram seems to raise more questions than it answers for the Prince, Maggie meets all of his questions with confident interpretations of the meanings of the telegram and of the absent couple.

As her father did throughout his telegraphic encounters with Charlotte, Maggie continually asserts her position as omniscient author and interpreter of the scene and thus completely co-opts any power on the part of the actual sender/author of the telegram, her rival, Charlotte. In the earlier scene, Adam's efforts to maintain a comfortable

controlling position as “author” of his fate and of the scene are continually undercut through narrative techniques: the narrative undercuts the reader’s faith in Adam’s interpretive abilities by reflecting his emotional flights of fancy through free indirect discourse and then belying his accuracy with its straight reporting of the external facts of the situation and of Charlotte’s responses as not matching with his imaginings. Here, however, the narrative seems to support Maggie’s “reading” and although Amerigo at times questions her conclusions, the narrative offers no real alternative to her interpretation and is so firmly grounded inside her perspective that her authority remains relatively unchallenged in the scene. While Amerigo struggles to fully accept her definitive interpretation of the telegram and all that it implies and asks why the Ververs won’t dine with them and more particularly why her father wouldn’t give her his last evening in England, Maggie firmly maintains her attitude of unruffled self-possession and control of the situation:

This was for Maggie more difficult to meet; yet she was still not without her stop-gap. “That may be what they’ll propose – that we shall go somewhere together, the four of us, for a celebration – except that to round it thoroughly off we ought also to have Fanny and the Colonel. They don’t *want* them at tea, she sufficiently expresses; they polish them off, poor dears, they get rid of them beforehand. They want only *us* together; and if they cut us down to tea,” she continued, “as they cut Fanny and the Colonel down to luncheon, perhaps it’s after all for the fancy of their keeping their last night in London for each other.” (560)

Here Maggie stresses her understanding of what Charlotte “sufficiently expresses” and although she privately hears herself as though she’s “throwing everything to the winds” with these interpretive leaps—the narrative offers no alternative reading of Charlotte’s message and particularly of her mentioning of her wiring to the Assinghams and thus the reader—and the Prince as far as we see his response—are left to accept Maggie’s reading as correct. While in the earlier exchange between Charlotte and Adam and in Charlotte’s

private consumption of Amerigo's message, the telegrams seemed to grant authority to their authors and to take away power from their recipients by withholding their meanings, here Maggie's ownership of the telegram is stressed—it is “her paper” and “her telegram” rather than Charlotte's—and her possession of the folded leaf seems to reaffirm her supreme authoring power over the “last” meeting and indeed over the intertwined relations of the two couples.

Rather than constraining her or confusing her, the telegram from Charlotte liberates Maggie and its overriding meaning appears crystal clear for her. The arrival of the telegram and the act of sharing it with her husband allow Maggie a clear-eyed view of their situation and she imagines the caged Amerigo waiting for his release as similar to and yet different from the situation of the “noble captives” of the French Revolution:

For the people of the French Revolution assuredly there wasn't suspense; the scaffold, for those she was thinking of, was certain – whereas what Charlotte's telegram announced was, short of some incalculable error, clear liberation. Just the point however was in its being clearer to herself than to him; her clearnesses, clearances – those she had so all but abjectly laboured for – threatened to crown upon her in the form of one of the clusters of angelic heads, the peopled shafts of light beating down through iron bars, that regale on occasion precisely the fevered vision of those who are in chains. (561)

The narrative emphasizes Maggie's awareness of her own greater purchase on the situation and particularly on the telegram's meaning—“just the point however was in its being clearer to herself than to him”—and indeed for Maggie this knowledge of her greater perception and greater power threaten to overwhelm her with an almost mystical fervor. The narrative juxtaposes Maggie's “clearnesses” and “clearances” as descriptions of the fruits of her labors; interestingly, while “clearnesses” seems to refer relatively clearly to her “clearer” understanding of the meaning of the telegraphic message and of their present relations, the additional word “clearances” suggests a financial transaction—

as though a check has cleared, or someone has sold something at a bargain—and conjures up the image of an active clearing of space and a physical removal of obstructions on the scene. Clearances thus emphasizes Maggie's active role—"those she had so all but abjectly laboured for"—in achieving her present state of knowledge and power. The reception of this telegraphic message—and her sudden clarity that she understands it so much better than her husband does—widens Maggie's view of her own and Amerigo's situation and leads to a frank discussion of "where they are" and eventually they are able to "meet" over the telegram to deepen and clarify their understanding of one another. Thus in the novel's final usage of the telegram, James uses the telegraphic form once again to emphasize imbalances in power and knowledge between his characters, to dramatize the power relations inherent in the author/sender and reader/recipient relation, and to generate and complicate the internal and external action of his characters as they develop their relations with one another using the telegram to mediate their mutual understanding and communication.

Conclusion

James's language in describing Maggie's "clearnesses and clearances" hearkens back to Mrs. Touchett's phrase, "clearness is too expensive," and again powerfully gestures toward the telegram as an ideally suited vehicle for James's experiments with formal economies and dramas of power in his fiction. The linkage of "clearness" with expense and with the financial exchanges alluded to in "clearances" crystallizes James's interests in exploring the connections between textual forms (and their ability to communicate) and the system of market relations which produce and disseminate different textual forms (the clearances required for these acts of communication). The

malleability of the telegram for James—its ability to be subtly refashioned to function differently at distinct moments in his career and for distinct purposes in different authorial projects—is in part enabled by the telegram’s status as an expensive form of print culture, whose price per word emphasizes the ways in which textual communication is only made possible through exchanges of power and money. The telegrams circulate transatlantically through a network of socio-economic exchange and they reflect on the multiple “costs” of communication. Telegrams are ideal vehicles for James to consider and experiment with the ways in which material forms can be shaped by market forces (i.e. Mrs. Touchett refines her telegraphic style in order to eschew expensive “clearness”) and for considering the power relations involved in the transmission, receipt, and interpretation of these costly messages. In these three texts, James’s formal technologies for shading his characters’ possession of control and their grasp of narrative authority depend on telegraphic exchanges and on the models of reading and interpreting that telegrams generate. In essence, looking at how telegrams function in these texts allows us to see the ways in which James’s most seemingly abstract formal economies of representing power relations and communication between his characters are actually inseparably tied to his investigation of the telegram as a resonant form of print culture.

Through his continual return to telegraphy, James develops his literary experiments in dialogue with a form of textuality deeply connected to market forces and to transatlantic print circulation. James’s use of the telegram contributes to my larger argument that modernist formal experimentation is crucially generated by its contact and engagement with transatlantic cultures of print and with the material forms circulated within those cultures. This chapter looked at the ways in which James engaged

productively with the telegram to develop his modernist style and to experiment with narrative technique in his fiction in his writing at the end of the nineteenth and in the early years of the twentieth century. Moving forward from these early moments in the development of modernism, the following chapter argues that T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* centrally engages with the narrative techniques and with the cultural legacy surrounding the circulation of the novel in the nineteenth century.

¹ Henry James, *The Portrait of A Lady* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1984), 67. I refer to the dates of publication as 1880-81 because *The Portrait of A Lady* was first published serially (in *Macmillan's Magazine* and in *The Atlantic Monthly*) over those years and then published in volume form by Macmillan's of London in 1881. Hereafter referred to parenthetically with page numbers.

² Henry James, telegram to Mrs. Hugh Bell, this is used as the epigraph to Mark Goble's excellent essay "Wired Love: Pleasure at a Distance in Henry James and Others" (*ELH*, 74.2 (Summer 2007)) but it is unfortunately undated and unattributed to any source and I have not been able to locate the original source as the telegram does not appear in the index for Edel's edition of Henry James's *Letters*.

³ Ken Beauchamp, *The History of Telegraphy* (London: The Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2001), 4.

⁴ Beauchamp, 4. As Beauchamp notes, at the time of its institution the variety of possible coded meanings spoke in favor of Murray's shutter systems over competing models: "It is likely that the Murray system was chosen by the Admiralty for its number of shutters, which allowed for 63 different combinations; after the letters of the alphabet had been allocated, the remaining combinations could be used to represent the numerals 0 to 9 and various coded words. The shutters were controlled by pulling on ropes from inside a specially designed building surmounted by the large and heavy wooden shutter system. Each building was over 10m high, including 5m for the shutter system, and located on a suitable hill, having visual sight of neighbouring signaling stations in the communication chain. Many of these locations, now bereft of signaling systems, are known to this day as 'Telegraph Hill'. In good weather the system was surprisingly effective: a message between London and Portsmouth might take about 15 minutes to pass through the ten stations en route, with a shorter time required for acknowledgment" (4).

⁵ Beauchamp, 6. The shutter systems were "cumbersome and prone to mechanical defects, and after 1815 were gradually replaced by a semaphore system, already in use in France, in which movable wooden arms conveyed the information through the network. This soon came to be accepted as the standard mechanical telegraph in the first half of the nineteenth century, copied and replicated in many nations" (6).

⁶ Beauchamp, 17.

⁷ Beauchamp, 30, 32.

⁸ Beauchamp, 32.

⁹ Beauchamp explains the expansion of the network and its development of coded abbreviations: "The railroads and the press were now the major users of the commercial telegraph network. To a large extent the telegraph companies were in the beginning news

agencies, and the operator-managers were expected to gather news items about their own localities, and, when requested, to telegraph these on for a fee. Use of the telegraph by journalists brought with it a particular language for abbreviations, used to save both money and time in telegraphing news through from the reporting agents. This was widely applied in the United States, where the use of such abbreviations almost became an art form. Typical abbreviations were *potus* for “President of the United States”, *yam* for “yesterday morning”, *gx* for “great excitement”, *ogt* for “on the ground that”, and *scotus* for “Supreme Court of the United States”” (60).

¹⁰ Beauchamp, 51.

¹¹ Beauchamp, 63. Beauchamp describes how the “sounder” worked: “The sounder [...] consisted simply of an electromagnet acting on a pole piece, mounted on a pivoted sounding lever, and working between two stops. When the magnet was energized and then released, the sounder emitted a click which could be recognized as resulting from either a short or long period of excitation. In a later version, and the one employed by the British Post Office as standard equipment, a double-plate sounder was used. This became known as “Bright’s bells” a British adaptation of the sounder, designed by Charles Bright in 1855. By means of a polarized relay, the received dot and dash signals were made to activate one of two relay strikers acting on bells of different tones or, in a later variant, sounding plates of brass or steel” (63).

¹² Beauchamp, 81. Beauchamp documents the changing telegraphic networks and their increasing affordability: “A policy of clearing away all of London’s rooftop lines was put into effect, and they were instead placed “safely and quietly underground” [...] At the same time exchange switchboards were installed in all the main distribution centres. From February 1870 it became possible to send a telegram for one shilling [5p] from one end of the British Isles to the other. The popularity of the “shilling telegraph” did much to endear the nationalized service to the general public” (81).

¹³ Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 72.

¹⁴ William John Johnston, *Telegraphic Tales and Telegraphic History: A Popular Account of the Electric Telegraph—Its Uses, Extent and Outgrowths* (New York, NY: W.J. Johnston in New York, 1880). The Preface explains the occasion for the book’s publication: “Some time ago the subscriber published a number of anecdotes relating to telegraphy, which were received with an unexpected degree of favor. They were so extensively copied in the newspapers as to set him thinking that the preparation of such a book as this would please the reading public, as well as members of the telegraphic profession. Hence the undertaking herewith put on the book market as a candidate for popular favor. No more is claimed for it than that it presents, in a methodized and compact form, a comprehensive summary of such telegraphic information as is likely to be valued by the general public, and of use to the operator because of its presentation—varied, as is desirable, with lighter matter” (iii).

¹⁵ Johnston, 61,108.

¹⁶ Michael Anesko, *Friction with the Market: Henry James and the Profession of Authorship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), ix.

¹⁷ Telegraphy offered a new sort of global circulation of news and gossip as remarked upon by George Iles in his *Flame, Electricity, and the Camera: Man's Progress from the First Kindling of Fire to the Wireless Telegraph and the Photography of Color* (New York, NY: J.A. Hill, 1904): "Mark the news columns of the press as they make the world a whispering-gallery and broaden the provincial view to the comprehension of the globe. The speeches of Parliament at Westminster are in the hands of readers in New York before the speakers have gone to their beds [...] The applause won by an American prima donna at the opera in Paris or Dresden, the reception of the American ambassador as he is greeted by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, the progress toward confederation in the colonies of Australasia, all become part and parcel of the gossip of tea-tables in Wisconsin and Vermont. Thus there springs up that comity of nations which is so little furthered by an obvious wooing, and that declines to be promoted by the arguments of the Peace Society—for all the pathos of their appeal"(192). Iles' description is interestingly gendered here through the references to "tea-tables" and "gossip" and the "whispering-gallery" and his description emphasizes the social implications of the telegram and the global and national links that it can form.

¹⁸ See Richard Menke's article, "Telegraphic Realism: Henry James's *In the Cage*." *PMLA* 115 (2000) and Mark Goble's article, "Wired Love: Pleasure at a Distance in Henry James and Others."

¹⁹ Goble, 398-9. Some of his most provocative examples of the genre incorporate actual transcriptions of morse code into their narratives and involve lovers tapping out messages to one another in code across train cars or into one another's lodgings.

²⁰ Goble elaborates on the connections between James's narrative methods and his engagement with telegraphy: "James's insistence on the circuitous, at the level of narrative construction, thus coincides with his interest in the telegraph as a central artifact of the modernity that he depicts" (401). Yet Goble focuses much more on the erotics of telegraphy and particularly on how those pleasures develop for Lambert Strether in *The Ambassadors*.

²¹ Interestingly, James explicitly describes the mismatching of Gilbert and Isabel as a mis-reading: "She had had a more wondrous vision of him, fed through charmed senses and oh such a stirred fancy! – she had not read him right. A certain combination of features had touched her, and in them she had seen the most striking of figures. That he was poor and lonely and yet that somehow he was noble – that was what had interested her and seemed to give her her opportunity" (476).

²² Michael Anesko's account of James's failure with "Guy Domville" attempts to counter Edel and others who view the theatre experimentation as an anomaly or as James's one experiment with the competitive market: "James's plays may indeed be literary curiosities, but his professional experiment with the theatre epitomizes the concern for fame, art, and fortune that affected the entire range of his career" (19). For a more detailed account of James's experiments in theater see Anne Margolis, *Henry James and the Problem of Audience: An International Act* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985).

²³ In his essay "Framed and Wired": Teaching "In the Cage" at the Intersection of Literature and Media" (*Henry James Review*, 25.1 (2004) 33-43), Richard Menke makes some provocative points about how these shifts in composition might enhance one's teaching of *In the Cage*: "For one thing, it seems likely that James's dictation helped open his writing to speech in a new way, encouraging for instance those many moments in which his prose takes up a spoken idiom used by a character or within the narrative and then pauses to comment on it, modify it, or examine it from different angles, as if half surprised that such an oral expression is about to appear on the page. Students may even note the ways in which, for all of the glorious dilation of the Jamesian sentence, "In the Cage" at times seems to pick up something of the tense linguistic compression of a telegram message, especially when characters are speaking to one another. "No two styles could be more opposite than the modernist long sentence with its implications of connotative complexity and the short and economical style of the telegram," observes Rowe, "[y]et they are the two styles that typify modernity" (159). Moreover, both of these may be the styles of words that have moved between technological media and passed through clerical mediation: James's dictation to a typist and the telegram's conversion from written words to Morse code and back again. And just because a telegram is terse doesn't mean that it can't be acutely ambiguous—as James's telegraphist, along with many users of the telegraph (including Ralph Touchett in the first scene of *The Portrait of a Lady*), has reason to note" (38-39).

²⁴ Richard Menke, "Telegraphic Realism: Henry James's *In the Cage*." *PMLA* 115 (2000), 975-90.

²⁵ Menke, "Telegraphic Realism," 975. Menke argues that the telegraphist "represents telegraphy not just as a mode of communication but also as a social practice, a medium of discourse come to life, an information exchange rendered no longer transparent" ("Telegraphic Realism" 976). Menke also compellingly asserts that James explores these ideas of mediation through his formal techniques and by complicating the mid-century realist convention of the third-person omniscient narrator: "The telegraphist fantasizes that she can see into others but that no one really knows her, a situation that echoes the structure of knowledge in third-person narrative, especially the supervision exercised by the narrators of mid-century realist novels" ("Telegraphic Realism" 982).

²⁶ *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, Volume 11 (New York, NY: Scribners, 1907-1909), (xvii-xix).

²⁷ Hugh Stevens has read the story as a comment on contemporary homoerotic scandals with telegraph boys. See Stevens' "Queer Henry In the Cage," *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, edited by Jonathan Freedman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 120-38.

²⁸ Henry James, *Selected Tales* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2001), 314. Hereafter referred to parenthetically with page numbers.

²⁹ These connotations of the gap between the classes as a physical barrier are repeated in the narrative's account of Mrs. Jordan—the florist to the wealthy—who feels "that a single step more would transform her whole social position" (316). The narrative recounts Mrs. Jordan's belief that "a door more than half open to the higher life couldn't be called anything but a thin partition. Mrs. Jordan's imagination quite did away with the thickness." And yet she also comes up against the impassibility of this barrier as she marries the butler not the master of the house.

³⁰ This narrative presentation of the telegraphist casts her as a contemplative and self-reflexive person who is much occupied by her somewhat cold and distant observations of others and her reflections on her own feelings (which can at times feel equally objective and distanced). Thus the narrative presents "her" judgment of Mr. Mudge as both discerning and somewhat cold—he is defined by his slight superiority to the other clerks and also as a somewhat depressing reminder of the bleakness of her future: "Opposite there, behind the counter of which his superior stature, his whiter apron, his more clustering curls and more present, too present, *h*'s had been for a couple of years the principle ornament, he had moved to and fro before her as on the small sanded floor of their contracted future"(315). The reference to the space he used to inhabit as "opposite there" seems to place this sentence almost entirely in her thoughts if not also echoing her coolly appraising voice. She seems to have cracked the code of his pretensions to stand out from other clerks—his "too present" *h*'s indicate her understanding of his over-correcting of many lower-class speakers' dropped *h*'s. And also to have deciphered the nuances of her own feelings for him—her self-awareness is suggested by her feeling of shame at her sense of relief when he is less present, the reference to their "contracted future," and her awareness of his being simply "more" than the other clerks as the major attractive force.

³¹ The only major change described in the opening section is the telegraphist's fall from economic security which occurred in an "early" undetermined past and which remains somewhat ambiguous and it is not until the end of the second section that a specific moment in time begins to generate the plot development of the text: "she yet saw something happen in the course of a month [...] the appearance of the memorable lady" (317).

³² She describes her second telegraphic encounter with Everard as very intimate and distinct: "the sense of every syllable he paid for was fiercely distinct; she indeed felt her progressive pencil, dabbing as if with a quick caress the marks of his own, put life into

every stroke [...] But she kept hold of him throughout; she continued, for herself, in a relation with him as close as that in which, behind the hated ground glass, Mr. Buckton luckily continued with the sounder” (321).

³³ Henry James, *The Golden Bowl* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987). Hereafter cited parenthetically with page numbers. When Maggie summons Fanny through a telegram, the summons takes on added shades of meaning when linked with all of the significant telegraphic encounters which precede it. After a strange dinner that Maggie arranges at the Assinghams where she is very “assertive” and behaves in a way very unlike her former self, the narrative describes Fanny’s attempts to “read” the pages offered by Maggie and the actual telegram that she receives from her friend:

The lady of Cadogan Place was to read deeper, however, within three days, and the page was turned for her on the eve of her young confidant’s leaving London. The awaited migration to Fawns was to take place on the morrow, and it was known meanwhile to Mrs. Assingham that their party of four were to dine that night, at the American Embassy, with another and a larger party; so that the elder woman had a sense of surprise on receiving from the younger, under date of six o’clock, a telegram requesting her immediate attendance. ‘Please come to me at once; dress early, if necessary, so that we shall have time: the carriage, ordered for us, will take you back first.’ Mrs. Assingham, on quick deliberation, dressed, though not perhaps with full lucidity, and by seven o’clock was in Portland Place, where her friend, ‘upstairs’, and described to her on her arrival as herself engaged in dressing, instantly received her. She knew on the spot, poor Fanny, as she was afterwards to declare to the Colonel, that her feared crisis had popped up as at the touch of a spring, that her impossible hour was before her. (429)

Here, Maggie’s telegram announces the major climax in the relation between Fanny and Maggie—“the impossible hour” when Maggie tells her friend of the extensive past that was “between” Charlotte and Amerigo before she knew him and the moment when Maggie dramatically recounts her purchase of the golden bowl itself. Interestingly, the metaphor of Fanny reading “the page” of the situation before her directly leads to the actual material page of the telegraphic summons which is “under date of six o’clock.” Again, the hypothetical or metaphoric register shifts into the very real document of a telegram and here the abstract references to “reading” the scene become translated into the urgency of correctly interpreting and responding to the telegram. While Maggie’s message does not seem on the surface to contain anything too ominous, the urgency of the wording—the orders for Fanny to “come to me at once” and to “dress early” combined with the stamp of a very recent hour—quickly produces the appearance of Fanny in response to Maggie’s request and heightens readerly interest, as the reader is, like Fanny, unaware of the motives behind Maggie’s telegram at this point in the text. The phrase “so that we will have time” seems to convey the bulk of the meaning that Fanny reads into the message—that Maggie knows that Fanny “had known of old so much more than she had ever said” (429)—even though Maggie leaves the question of

what they might have time for vague and unuttered. Here, the telegram remains ambiguous—concealing just how much Maggie knows—and in its withholding gesture the terse message exerts even more power over Fanny who is compelled to respond and who is terrified by the prospect of what the telegram might mean. Additionally, the ambiguity also intensifies the readerly interest and suspense over what might have occasioned such a telegram and places the reader on the side of Fanny—who, like the reader, grasps at the clues in Maggie’s words, and who only slowly and gradually sounds the true measure of Maggie’s knowledge as the pivotal conversation surrounding the golden bowl and its history develops between them.

Here the telegram works as a summons to convey the unequal power relations between Fanny and Maggie as Fanny has no choice but to follow her orders and immediately face her dreaded “impossible hour.” Interestingly, the phrase “the crisis had popped up at the touch of a spring” resonates with the earlier phrase, “at the pressure of some spring of her inner vision” (305), used to describe Fanny’s emotional response to her imagination of the terrifyingly free “wirings” that the Prince and Charlotte might be capable of sending to their spouses. This repeated metaphor links the action of telegrams—both imagined horrors and real messages—to a spring-like technology which dramatically effects and propels internal and external action on the part of the characters. Importantly, a telegram is the motive force which generates Fanny’s presence and which enables the crucial climatic scene in the novel with the smashing of the golden bowl itself. The golden bowl is even described as bearing some resemblance to the telegraphic machinery elsewhere in the novel as Fanny imagines the bowl as taking on the character of a testifying “document”: “The golden bowl put on, under consideration, a sturdy, a conscious perversity; as a ‘document’, somehow, it was ugly, though it might have a decorative grace” (438). Here, the golden bowl takes on the character of an incriminating “document” and through this description, the novel constructs a connection between the Prince’s telegram to Charlotte (the material document which could have “dished” the second marriage by suggesting just how much was “between” the receiver and the sender) and the bowl itself (whose material history also testifies to all that was “between” them). Telegrams are so central to James’s novel here that they not only mediate every key relationship and many pivotal interactions in the text, but also are linked by association to the eponymous object in this moment.

³⁴ Telegraphic imagery is used metaphorically to obliquely describe the Prince’s silent communication with Charlotte at Matcham as the Prince tries to think his way out of he and Charlotte taking the same train as the Assinghams James’s narrator notes the lack of “straight telegraphy” between them: “His preference had during the evening not failed of occasion to press him mute insistences; practically without words, without any sort of straight telegraphy, it had arrived at a felt identity with Charlotte’s own. She spoke all for their friend while she answered their friend’s question, but she none the less signaled to him as definitely as if she had fluttered a white handkerchief from a window. ‘It’s awfully sweet of you, darling – our going together would be charming. But you mustn’t mind us – you must suit yourselves; we’ve settled, Amerigo and I, to stay over till after luncheon.’ Amerigo, with the chink of this gold in his ear, turned straight away, so as not to be instantly appealed to; and for the very emotion of the wonder, furthermore, of what

divination may achieve when winged by a community of passion. Charlotte had uttered the exact plea that he had been keeping ready for the same foreseen necessity, and had uttered it simply as a consequence of their deepening unexpressed need of each other and without the passing between them of a word” (282). After being sent off by Charlotte and the Prince, Fanny Assingham worries about the possible freedoms the couple may have taking by “wiring” to their spouses from Matcham. Fanny, thinking out loud to Bob, worries about what Charlotte and Amerigo might wire and what their wiring “home” might mean: “[They m]ay have stayed over at Matcham itself till tomorrow. May have wired home, each of them, since Maggie left me. May have done,’ Fanny Assingham continued, ‘God knows what!’ She went on suddenly with more emotion – which, at the pressure of some spring of her inner vision, broke out in a wail of distress imperfectly smothered” (304-305). Here the threat of “wiring” seems to set off some inward vision for Fanny and to convey the sense of the terrifying freedom that the absent couple might possess through this technology—in its apparent openness and in its seeming, as Charlotte would say, to reflect their “perfect honesty.” Although, the telegram-horrors in Fanny’s mind never materialize—the couple does return that evening, presumably without wiring ahead—this reference shows that the telegram continues to be a powerful symbol and potentially meaning-laden mediator in the fictional world of *The Golden Bowl*.

³⁵ Sharon Cameron, *Thinking in Henry James* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 119-120.

³⁶ Cameron, 120.

³⁷ Adam’s physical movement mirrors his psychical shifting in this scene: “He again stood staring; but the next minute, with that upward spring of his shoulders and that downward pressure of his pockets which she had already more than once at disconcerted moments determined in him, he turned sharply away and wandered from her in silence. He looked about in his small despair; he crossed the hotel court, which, overarched and glazed, muffled against loud sounds and guarded against crude sights, heated, gilded, draped, almost carpeted with exotic trees in tubs, exotic ladies in chairs, the general exotic accent [... He] took counsel afresh of his usual optimism, sharpened even somehow just here by the very air he tasted, and then came back smiling to Charlotte” (203-204).

³⁸ Interestingly, this series of “we’s” creates a recursive movement in the paragraph and surrounding the telegram which points back to the receipt of the missive and to the beginning of the paragraph in which it is finally revealed; Charlotte’s expression of what the Prince “might” have said “if he had blurted” gestures back toward the first sentences of the paragraph: “She was to remember not a little meanwhile the particular prolonged silent look with which the Prince had met her allusion to these primary efforts at escape. She was inwardly to dwell on the element of the unuttered that her tone had caused to play up into his irresistible eyes; and this because she considered with pride and joy that she had on the spot disposed of the doubt, the question, the challenge, or whatever else might have been, that such a look could convey” (244).

³⁹ Here the telegram places communication between author and reader amidst a dynamic web of public and private possibilities: it functions as a liberating way to speak in code to using modern technology, but also threatens to become dangerously expensive if the code is broken. Importantly, James takes this duality of the telegram—its promise of private communication through modern means and simultaneous threat of exposure to the public gaze—as the central subject of “In the Cage.”

Chapter 3

Tom and Vivien Eliot Do Narrative in Different Voices: Mixing Genres in *The Waste Land's* Pub

Introduction:

“He do the police in different voices,” T.S. Eliot’s original title for the poem that became *The Waste Land*, announces the poem’s interest in voices and in the types of readerly performance made possible by narrative fiction. Borrowed from Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), the phrase is taken from the mouth of “old Betty Higden, a poor widow,” who describes the reading practice of Sloppy, a foundling who reads Betty the newspaper out loud: “You mightn’t think it, but Sloppy is a beautiful reader of a newspaper. He do the Police in different voices.”¹ Eliot’s allusive gesture thus describes a specific type of reader – a reader who surprises expectations and who plays with the possibilities of story-telling; given Sloppy’s class status it is surprising that he can read at all, let alone in a “beautiful” and skillful way. Focusing on the aborted title’s allusion to Dickens allows us to glimpse *The Waste Land’s* multiple links to the cluster of associations surrounding nineteenth-century novels and nineteenth-century popular reading practices; the allusion points to a realm bristling with story-telling, the voices of women and lower class figures, popular culture, narrative techniques, and the desires and demands of a mass reading audience. Historically, the poem’s significant connections to the cultural province of the nineteenth-century novel and to narrative techniques have been obscured by the ways in which the poem has been canonized as the emblematic

modern lyric sculpted by Eliot and by Pound to reject and exclude just those elements revealed in the cancelled title.

Critics like Lawrence Rainey and David Chinitz have importantly revised the tendency of critical history to cast *The Waste Land* as a neoclassical poem that must be read according to the dictates of “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” as an “impersonal” poem un-tethered to Eliot’s local and personal history and to popular culture.² Rainey argues that instead the poem can be meaningfully understood as connected to popular aesthetic models like the music hall and typist fiction. Building on the recent body of scholarship on a more “popular” version of Eliot, I argue that Eliot’s poem is crucially linked to the narrative modes, the female and lower-class voices, and the readerly practices and desires associated by many modernist writers with nineteenth-century novelistic print culture. I read *The Waste Land*’s initial invocation of Dickens’s novel in conjunction with the poem’s later pub scene, in “A Game of Chess,” in which the speaker’s narrative performance echoes the many-voiced story-telling sensibilities of Sloppy, Dickens’s working-class figure who transforms newspapers into polyvocal narratives. By revisiting the drafted version of the poem and the pub sequence in particular, we can also recover the mostly obscured collaboration of Vivien Eliot in the making of the poem. Vivien played a crucial role as co-author of the “A Game of Chess” pub sequence and her revisions help to develop the poem’s interest in narrative performance and in the cluster of concerns often associated with the nineteenth-century novel. By focusing on the narrative moment in the pub and recovering the role of Vivien’s voice in shaping the poem, I am arguing that narrative elements and female voices are central to the making and meaning of *The Waste Land*.

In “Eliot, Gender and Modernity,” her introduction to the recent collection of essays *Gender, Desire and Sexuality in T.S. Eliot*, Cassandra Laity explains that her volume of collected essays will build upon the growing critical interest in the relationship between modernism and the high and low cultures of modernity. She argues that this increased focus on Eliot’s engagement with modernity will bring to view “Eliot’s largely unexplored engagement with various public and private worlds of women, eroticism, and the feminine.”³ My reading of the mixing of genres, genders, and high and low cultural registers in *The Waste Land* participates in these new conversations within Eliot studies and repositions Eliot within exciting conversations about modernity which focus on gender, on class, and on the cross-fertilization between high and low cultures. The poem’s composition, content, pre-circulation, and development through drafts demonstrate Eliot’s pervasive engagement with mixing genres, genders, classes and cultures in the production of his poem. We can use Eliot’s experimentation with narrative techniques and his investment in female and working-class voices to reexamine his negotiations of modernity and of the modern literary marketplace.

My focus on narrative elements in *The Waste Land* allows me to consider the kind of “generic contract” that Eliot negotiated with his readers and the readerly desires and expectations—including those alert to changing modes of gender—that he engages in these moments of mixing.⁴ What does it mean for our understanding of *The Waste Land* if we see the poem as animated, at least in part, by the poet’s need to address a key tension between narrative and lyric modes of understanding modern experience? My reading explores the differences it might make to our understandings of modernist poetry’s response to modernity if we reconsider the aesthetic and cultural work that

narrative techniques perform in the poem. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot constructs reading—both the reading performed *in* the text and the reading *required by* the text—as a specifically modern practice. The poem’s insistent mixing of genres raises many questions about the cultural province of poetry and about the offices of the poem in the modern era. How can modern poets make use of multiple voices, fragmentary formal structures, and juxtaposed genres to refashion poetry as an adequate aesthetic response to modernity? How can poetry compete with narrative as an appealing and relevant form in the modern aesthetic and commercial marketplace? My reading of Eliot’s engagement with narrative techniques argues for a revised reading of *The Waste Land* and of canonical understandings of modernist poetics that places the powerful mixing of genres and genders at the center of modernist formal experimentation.

Enabling my analysis of the mixing of genres and genders within the poem’s literary development is my recovery of the shadow figure of Vivien Eliot and her role in the poem’s material development on the pages of the drafts that were circulated between Tom and Vivien and Ezra Pound. My reading of *The Waste Land* repositions Vivien at the center of the poem’s labor and interprets the pub sequence from “A Game of Chess”—the moment in the published poem which Vivien most heavily annotates and most effectively helps to shape—as a moment staged through narrative techniques and crisscrossed by class, gender, and intensified readerly desires. In the pub scene, T. S. Eliot and his collaborator Vivien draw from techniques and subjects that are usually associated with the novel: reported dialogue, the problem of witnessing, female and lower-class voices, sympathy, and layered time-effects. Although the story of the making of *The Waste Land* has been canonized as Eliot and Pound’s homosocial “caesarean”

birth of the high modernist lyric poem, the counter-history of Vivien's central role as midwife to a key non-lyric moment of narrative desire reveals *The Waste Land* to be a text more porous and unstable in its creation of author and reader than usually assumed.

Crucially, the pub sequence is the site of the poem's most substantial experimentation with narrative form *and* the moment when Vivien's voice as collaborator is most transformative. My re-reading of *The Waste Land* focuses on the strange narrative interlude in the pub to recast the production of *The Waste Land* as a process profoundly preoccupied with gender, with class, with female voices, with authorial collaboration, and with the limits of lyricism and the promises of narrative.

Narrative Erupts into the Lyric

Before proceeding to my reading of "A Game of Chess," I would like to clarify what I mean when discussing the generic qualities of both lyric and narrative. Heather Dubrow acknowledges the three major methodological challenges facing critics who wish to perform this type of genre criticism: critics are stymied by "dubious definitions and the rankings they often encode or justify; that expectation of a combative relationship issuing in a clear victor; and the absence of historical distinctions."⁵ Like Dubrow, who evades these potential pitfalls by refusing to place genres within a hierarchy and by considering moments when genres cooperate rather than those when they compete, I hope to avoid these problems by examining how the genres interact in the pub sequence without prioritizing one or the other as inherently more valuable or inevitably victorious (and by

historicizing the categories, a strategy I will discuss in more depth later). Dubrow usefully lays out her understanding of the defining qualities of narrative and lyric modes:

“Risking the dangers of schematization, one could say that if narrative often, though of course not always, involves a story that is set in the past (which differs of course from the time of discourse) and located in a mimesis of physical space (“it happened in this place”) and lyric often the mode that focuses on lyric present or overlapping timeschemes and a mimesis of mental space (“it is happening in my mind”).”⁶

For my purposes, Dubrow’s definition works well—the pub scene forms a narrative because it tells a story that is set in the past and that is being narrated at a later time (in the pub) and involves a sense of physical space: the speaker continually refers to being “there” at different points in her story and she concludes by reflecting on her visit to the house of Albert and Lil. Susan Stanford Friedman’s discussion of the differences between narrative and lyric also helps to highlight key elements in the pub scene that stand out from the rest of the poem: she emphasizes that narrative “foregrounds a sequence of events that move dynamically in space and time” while lyric “foregrounds a simultaneity, a cluster of feelings or ideas that project a gestalt in stasis.”⁷ The emphasis on the temporal sequence of the reported dialogue forms a key element that distinguishes the narrative pub scene from the more lyric sections of the poem as I will discuss later.

As my interest in these generic categories extends toward a consideration of the readerly desires that they promote, James Phelan’s rhetorical approach to genre also provides a useful source of clarification. Phelan outlines his definition of “narrativity” with “the phrase “something happened”” which “gets at the first layer; the phrase is designed to indicate that narrative involves a sequence of related events during which the characters and/or their situations undergo some *change*.”⁸ Additionally for Phelan it is crucial that this “something happened” is told by “somebody” (both narrator and author)

to “somebody else” (both the implied authorial audience and the external audience of “flesh and blood readers”).⁹ Importantly, Phelan is interested in the response involved by the implied position of the “somebody else”; Phelan asserts that “two activities of the authorial audience are particularly salient: observing and judging.”¹⁰ My understanding of the double development of the pub sequence has been enriched by Phelan’s discussion of the dual progression involved in narrative structures:

In short, just as there is a progression of events, there is a progression of audience response to those events, a progression rooted in the twin activities of observing and judging. Thus, from the rhetorical perspective concerned with what is represented and audience response to that representation, narrativity involves the *interaction of two kinds of change*: that experienced by the characters and that experienced by the audience in its developing responses to the characters’ changes.¹¹

In the pub scene in *The Waste Land* this double movement is interestingly complicated by the narrative’s abrupt truncation (which prevents the full development of both “changes”) and by the parenthetical insertions that gesture toward a later time in which the feelings of the pub speaker-narrator have undergone a transformation.¹² In the pub scene, the readerly interest is piqued by the emphasis on the location in the pub (the event of the telling which is constantly being interrupted and rushed toward closure by the barman’s last call), by the reader’s dual inclusion in and exclusion from the reported exchange between the speaker and Lil, finally by the suggestion of a meaningful change in the attitudes of the speaker. As a moment bound up with readerly interest in character, event, dialogue, sequence, climax, and culmination, change (both for the speaker and for the authorial audience), the pub scene in “A Game of Chess” clearly functions as a narrative interlude in the larger lyric landscape of the poem, in which a greater emphasis is placed on internal feelings of the various speakers, on simultaneity, and on figurative and allusive language.

Despite these gestures at definition, it is difficult to determine precisely what counts as “lyric” over time and also what counts as “non-lyrical” or “narrative” in 1601 versus in 2001; recent criticism—exemplified by Virginia Jackson’s work on Emily Dickinson and lyric reading—has emphasized the need to historicize these generic categories.¹³ Jackson agrees with Yopie Prins’s claim that there is no “objective” or eternal definition of lyric and acknowledges the difficulty in recovering the developmental history of the genre: “Still, as Prins implies, the object that the lyric has become is by now identified with an expressive theory that makes it difficult for us to place lyrics back into the sort of developmental history—of social relations, of print, of edition, reception, and criticism—that is taken for granted in definitions of the novel.”¹⁴ Jackson attempts to show “how poems become lyrics in history” and certainly the history of the cultural reception of *The Waste Land* as the defining poem of modernism and as the exemplar of the modern lyric has influenced how the category of “the lyric” was re-imagined by the modernists and taken up by critics following their lead.¹⁵ In other words, Eliot’s poetic style has come to define what counts as the modern lyric, and yet only certain aspects of Eliot’s style have been canonized in this way—the voice of the speaker in the pub seems distinct and separate from the “lyric Eliot” demonstrated in the poem’s virtuoso opening lines or even in the earlier half of “A Game of Chess.”

Though contemporary critics mostly accept *The Waste Land* as a key defining model for modern lyrics, early critical responses suggest that narrative desire and its frustration have also been key components of readerly responses to the poem from its beginnings. Since the poem’s early reception, critical frames for reading the poem seem to be generated by two readerly impulses: lyric desire and narrative desire. For the

purposes of my argument, “lyric desire” refers to the reader’s anticipated pleasure from reading highly stylized, imagistic, rhythmic, and metrical verse and from sharing in the states of mind and feelings of a poetic speaker. “Narrative desire,” on the other hand, describes the reader’s anticipated pleasure from engaging in a narrative: the emotional and personal investment in characters, the witnessing of the development of character and plot, and the hearing characters’ voices through dialogue.

To attempt to historicize what counted as “lyric” and what counted as “narrative” or even as “readerly desire” in 1922, I will briefly contextualize the poem through some early readerly responses to its publication. In an often quoted early review printed in December of 1922 in *The Dial*, Edmund Wilson attempts to anticipate and defend against the critiques he imagines for *The Waste Land*:

It is sure to be objected that Mr. Eliot has written a puzzle rather than a poem and that his work can possess no higher interest than a full-rigged ship built in a bottle [...] and I suppose it will be felt in connexion with this new poem that if his vulgar London girls had only been studied by Sherwood Anderson they would have presented a very different appearance [...] Well: all these objections are founded on realities, but they are outweighed by one major fact – the fact that Mr. Eliot is a poet [...] as I say, Mr. Eliot is a poet – that is, he feels intensely and with distinction and speaks naturally in beautiful verse – so that no matter within what walls he lives, he belongs to the divine company. His verse is sometimes much too scrappy – he does not dwell long enough upon one idea to give it its proportionate value before passing on to the next.¹⁶

In this review, Wilson relies on the sublime satisfaction of lyric desire to “outweigh” the unsettling and unfulfilled narrative desire of readers who become frustrated by the “puzzle” and who might desire that the “vulgar London girls” be more fully, satisfyingly narrated by a realist novelist. Even though he describes Eliot’s verse as “scrappy” in the sense that no narrative is fully developed or “valued” before it is dropped, Wilson glories in Eliot’s lyric performance and asserts that his ability to “speak naturally in beautiful

verse” should overcome any narrative failures. For Wilson, Eliot fits the definition of a poet because “he feels intensely and with distinction” *and* because of his ability to speak in beautiful verse; in other words, in his opinion, Eliot unites the content of lyric poetry—the poet’s feelings—with poetic expression (“beautiful verse”). Clearly, for Mr. Wilson, a poem’s ability to stimulate and sate lyric desire should far outweigh any lingering, unfulfilled narrative urges.

However, not all readers felt fully recompensed. Louis Untermeyer’s scathing review in the “Freeman” in January of 1923 blames the poem’s failure on the poet’s inability to “give form to formlessness” through the “series of severed narratives – tales from which the connecting tissue has been carefully cut – and familiar quotations with their necks twisted, all imbedded in that formless plasma.”¹⁷ From Untermeyer’s perspective the severed narratives are meaningless because they cannot be assimilated into a larger narrative or related to one another – his angry dismissal of the poem as irrelevant, pompous, and completely “self-congratulatory” along with his violent images of severing, cutting, and twisting speak to the painful frustration of the intense desire for narrative engendered by the poem. As the divergent views of Wilson and Untermeyer demonstrate, what counted as a successful “lyric” in 1922 was hotly contested. Indeed, Eliot’s poem was received as the new standard for the “lyric” and thus most of the naysayers (like Untermeyer) who continued to long for some sort of narrative arc or consistent speaker were eventually silenced as multiple speakers and lack of narrative fulfillment emerged as new elements of modernist poetics of impersonality. However, Eliot himself does not dismiss these urges quite as easily as some of his readers have; in

the pub sequence in “A Game of Chess” he signals his deep investment in narrative structures of meaning and in the readerly desires those structures motivate.

Last Call: Narrative Goes to the Pub

“A Game of Chess” opens with a highly lyrical and allusive description of an upper middle-class marriage and its habitat; the vision of the well-to-do couple and the fractured one-sided dialogue between the neurotic wife and the unresponsive, cynical husband paint a disturbing portrait of a desiccated upper middle-class marriage and of the types of interpersonal communication it allows. The alienated husband and wife are trapped in their artificial and meaningless existence where they must continually go through the motions and “play a game of chess” while they wait for the salvation of death or a less permanent release through interruption: “Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.” Eliot moves from this moment of painful anticipation to a completely different tone and place: the poem has violently shifted from the nervous, perfumed “sylvan scene” of the upper-class boudoir to the conversational, noisy atmosphere of a lower-class London pub. This abrupt shift from high to low is often read as a conflation of the two marriage narratives, showing all marriage as roughly equivalent to death; however, the dramatic shifts in style and poetic strategy suggest a more profound disjunction between Eliot’s representation of the classes and of their relative vitalities.

Eliot moves from the oft-rhyming and highly allusive first scene with its emphasis on literary and internalized language to the primarily oral, dialect-based, and distinctly non-allusive bar-room story. As Allison Tate argues in “The Master-Narrative of

Modernism: Discourses of Gender and Class in *The Waste Land*,” the narrator’s speech indexes the linguistic features of spoken speech rather than written narrative and also represents a distinctly working-class dialect, rather than simply a regional London accent.¹⁸ The first few lines of the scene immediately place us within the atmosphere of a pub and within a working-class, intimate narrative: “When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said— / I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself, / HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME” (ll. 139-141). These lines mark more than a lexical shift in class—they also mark a movement from lyrical poetry to a distinctly prosy and non-lyric mode of speech. The rhythm and meter of the lines and the complete absence of metaphor and allusion in the female narrator’s speech suggest a new mode of discourse in the poem, perhaps even an anti-lyrical or non-poetic voice.

The non-lyrical sound of these lines is compounded when considering the drafted versions of the poem and the original first line which apparently gave Eliot trouble: “When Lil’s husband was coming back out of the Transport Corps” (the end was cancelled and temporarily replaced with “Discharge out of the army??” which Pound fortunately replaced with “demobbed”).¹⁹ The initial draft of the poem seems even more anti-lyrical than the final version, which had been significantly modified by both Pound and Vivien. The stylistic shift represented in the drafts of this section indicates that Eliot intended this section of the poem to be distinct from the rest and to stand out as a completely different type of voice. Eliot’s decision to “avoid trying [to] show pronunciation by spelling” suggests his intent to create a more broadly applicable, working-class speech that would not point to a particular people (he avoids the Cockney specificity of Vivien’s suggested “somethink” when making this comment), but rather to

a different mode of speaking and of narrating.²⁰ The particular speech that Eliot employs in these lines inculcates an intimate, gossipy mood of tale-telling which creates a different sort of readerly desire, distinct from the lyric allusiveness and the expression of internal feelings that occur elsewhere in the poem.

One of the salient features of the narrator's speech is the emphasis on her having been actually present to have heard the words that she narrates: "I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself" (l. 140). The continual iterations of "I said" and the truth claims that seem contingent on her presence, "He did, I was there," continually emphasize that the narrator derives her authority not from some distant literary source, but rather from first-hand experience. Claims for truthfulness have been the purview of narrative fiction since its origins in early novels (typified by Aphra Behn's insistence on her status as a witness in her preface to *Oroonoko*) and in epistolary fiction (evident in Richardson's claims merely to have "edited" Pamela's letters). In addition to drawing on traditional justifications for fiction/narrative as a worthy genre, the speaker's implication that meaningful authority comes from one's actual presence at the moment of Lil's utterance raises complicated questions in the context of this narration; the speaker is distinguishing herself from her audience—both from her narratees, the imagined audience of fellow pub-goers, and from the readers of the poem—who were not "there" and can only observe and judge based on her narration rather than actually participating in the event with the speaker. The position of the audience here again reinforces the narrativity of this scene; the speaker's narratees (her audience in the pub) and the authorial audience cannot participate in the scene without judging the filtering and biases of the speaker-narrator's voice. This filtering creates a distance between the speaker and

author figures and their respective audiences that might have been avoidable in a lyric mode of expression. Despite the audience's apparent intimacy and inclusion within the environment of the bar, they will be unable to repeat this story with the same conversational style, ease, and enjoyment because of the distancing effect of the intervening text (i.e. she said that she said, I wasn't there). Thus, both internal audience (i.e. pubsters) and authorial audience (readers) may recognize a difference from the speaker through the same techniques (the insistence on witnessing and truth claims) that attempt to draw them into the intimate narration of the story. The audiences are put in the position of judging both the content of the story—the speaker-narrator's past interaction with Lil—and the manner in which she represents it—her style of narration. The distance between audience and story-teller complicates the ethical positions involved in the retelling and in the audience's (pub-goers and readers) relationship to the story, to the speaker-narrator, to its characters. What should the audience's position be in relation to the narrator and to Lil? Can the narratees and the readers guiltlessly desire to hear all about Lil's tragedy when the discourse is by necessity only one-sided and thus voyeuristic? These questions speak to the ethical and social positions inherent in all narratives and especially by cross-class fictional encounters. At this moment then, the poem diverges from its usual lyric mode to offer its audience a readerly experience of narrative; the narrator's insistence on the novelistic trope of witnessing urges the audience—who cannot directly witness, but who can judge based on the speaker-narrator's shifting attitudes toward the subject of her narration—to consider their own relationship to the text and to these appealing, but presumably alien “different voices” narrated in the pub.

While the speaker-narrator's tale focuses mainly on past events, the bartender's capitalized last call, "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME," which is introduced early on in the narrative and almost immediately interrupts the progression of the narrative, reintroduces the immediacy of the present-ness of her narrating act. The meaning of the juxtaposition lies in the anti-narrative force of the last call, which anticipates the bar closing at any minute, as opposed to the methodical, suspense-building and rather drawn-out narrative style of the speaker. Eliot's incorporation of the threat of the anti-narrative bar call heightens the reader's desire for the development of the narrative by creating the omnipresent sense that it might be unfulfilled and abruptly cut off at any moment.

After the initial interruption of the last call, Eliot continues to develop the characters and their narrative before the next bar call. In these lines, the speaker can clearly be identified as a woman and the sexual dynamic between her, Lil, and Albert becomes the focus as the narrator reports her direct advice to Lil, upon the event of Albert's imminent return:

Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look. (*ll.* 142-151)

Again, the speaker stresses her presence at the initial utterance of this reported dialogue; she also repeatedly indicates who said what to highlight the authenticity of her story. The continued emphasis on verifying reality and on speech authority unsettles any comfortable position for the reader as there are no notes and this section is far enough

into *The Waste Land* to cast considerable doubt on its truth-status. Once again, through the speaker's dubious emphasis on veracity, the reader is slightly alienated and distanced from the speaker, just at the moment when the story becomes dynamic and intriguing. The speaker's narration reveals intimate feelings occurring in a deeply troubled marriage, as well as in a sexually competitive friendship: Albert's crushing comment about his wife becomes even more insidious through the narrator's presence in that he slighted his wife's appearance and her claims to his attention in front of her friend and potential rival.²¹ The friend's repetition of the insult and her unsubtle hints that Albert could find a more attractive partner elsewhere seem to be spoken with pride: the speaker apparently feels both justified and pleased in her blunt attempts to advise her friend; she is proud of her ability not to mince words, both as a character trait and as a means to a good story. The speaker seems to view herself as the consummate narrator—one who can spin a good yarn both in the telling and in the actual acting out of it.

The glimpse that the speaker-narrator provides into her friendship and character suggests that this working-class female relationship allows Eliot to describe a companionship based upon honesty and a special brand of unspoken communication that can be contained in the brief phrases, "Oh is there,"²² "Something o' that," "Then I'll know who to thank," and "a straight look." Between these two friends, a little language goes a long way and this ease of communication between them is emphasized by the speaker's unabashedly frank tone. In this way, Eliot allows the reader to feel like part of the honest and telling communion between the two women (not needing translation or further explanation) and to be further drawn into the developing story. The inclusion of the reader in this intimate exchange helps to engender further narrative desire and to

further satisfy it: by suggesting that the reader shares an understanding of what both Lil and the speaker mean by their words and looks, the poem encourages the reader to develop an interest in the characters and to desire more information about the progression, climax, and ultimate telos of the story.

Invisible yet Invaluable: Vivien's Collaborations on *The Waste Land*

Taking cues from Ezra Pound – who cast himself as performing the “caesarean Operation” to deliver *The Waste Land* – critics often tell the story of the origins of the modernist movement as an act of homosocial midwifery and even as one of homoerotic consummation.²³ Indeed, since Valerie Eliot published her “A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound” in 1971, almost no critical discussion of modernism neglects to incorporate the story of the “birthing” of the movement through Eliot and Pound’s visible collaboration on the pages of the drafts. In *Double Talk*, his study of the erotics of male-male collaboration, Wayne Koestenbaum sees the collaborative and editorial processes as implicitly gendered and eroticized; Koestenbaum likens Pound and Eliot to two doctors approaching “the discontinuous poem as a woman in need of cure” and compares their efforts to a surprisingly productive act of male copulation: “The male modernist anus, a barren, intrinsically unprocreative zone, achieves a weird flowering—lilacs out of the dead land—when men collaborate; Pound penetrates Eliot’s waste land, and fills the hollow man with child.”²⁴ While Koestenbaum’s account is perhaps unusually figurative, his exclusive focus on the two male “parents” of the text reflects the overwhelming majority of scholarship on the poem and on the pre-publication materials.

The bibliographic coding of Valerie Eliot's seminal publication of the drafts also hints at the almost universal privileging of Pound's contribution to the poem.²⁵ The cover of her text presents a palimpsest with a replica of T.S. Eliot's signature in large red characters sitting at the top of the page, then immediately under it "The Waste Land" in a smaller rust colored font, followed by:

A FACSIMILE AND TRANSCRIPT
OF THE ORIGINAL DRAFTS INCLUDING
THE ANNOTATIONS OF EZRA POUND

Here the "Including" seems to function almost as a drum roll to announce the key headlining act of Pound's annotations. Yet why does the fascinating story of the *other* annotator get left off the cover and out of the majority of critical accounts of the making of the poem? The overwhelming critical neglect of this other collaborator – whose emendations have been just as accessible in the margins since 1971 – moves me to ask: who's afraid of Vivien Eliot?

While there are some exceptions to the general rule of Vivien's invisibility in critical discourse, even the critics who have the most interest in recovering the story of Eliot's first wife barely touch upon her role in shaping one of the key cultural monuments of modernism. Richard Badenhausen acknowledges Eliot's avowed dependence on his wife's opinion: "In a 1921 letter to Sydney Schiff [...] Eliot explains that he had finished a 'rough draft' of part III of *The Waste Land*, 'but [I] do not know whether it will do, and must wait for Vivien's opinion as to whether it is printable' (LI 484)."²⁶ Yet Badenhausen's interest in Vivien's editorial feedback derives from his larger argument about Eliot's consistent "collaborative impulse." He is more interested in the psychological dynamics of their acts of collaboration than in the texts that are produced

by these acts.²⁷ Like other critics who champion (or at least recognize) Vivien as an author, Badenhausen focuses mainly on her later pseudonymous publications in *The Criterion* rather than on her impact on *The Waste Land*.²⁸ While these critics often briefly cite Vivien's marginalia on the pages of the drafts, they do not fully analyze the specifics of her influence. Badenhausen's appraisal focuses on Vivien's most notable involvement with the poem – her collaboration on the pub scene in “A Game of Chess”; he compliments her for “altering the tone through ordinary language” and explains that “she helped give shape and authenticity to dramatic scenes less dependent on literary allusions.”²⁹ Even Carole Seymour-Jones, Vivien's recent feminist biographer, echoes Badenhausen's brand of faint praise—briefly noting that Vivien possessed an “ear for dialogue [that] was acute”; puzzlingly, in her mammoth account of Vivien's life in *Painted Shadow*, Seymour-Jones gives little space to discussing Vivien's impact on *The Waste Land*.³⁰

Before looking more closely at Vivien's influence on the pub sequence in “A Game of Chess,” I would like to introduce Vivien's voice as a writer through an analysis of her letters. Vivien's letters are lively and dramatic and also often quite humorous and self-mocking. Sydney Schiff's assessment of Vivien's epistolary voice, excerpted from a letter to Vivien dated December 9th, 1921, accurately characterizes most of Vivien's letters: “It is very encouraging to have a spontaneous expression of feeling like yours and I really am grateful [...] By the way, your letter reads exactly as though you were talking, which is a very good sign. Your natural sincerity is one of your fine qualities.”³¹ While much of Vivien's published correspondence centers around her illnesses and the Eliots' financial and household worries, she does also write to publishers and literary friends

about Tom's writing and about her role in their marriage. In a letter to Eliot's brother Henry on October 11, 1916, Vivien candidly expresses her feelings about Tom's leaving Harvard: "Tom took a much larger risk than that would be – a year ago – and I can swear he has never regretted it. Of course he has had me to shove him – I supply the motive power, and I *do* shove. If you were here I should shove you!"³² Vivien reveals her openness and her warmth to Henry (whom she had not yet met) and her mix of humor and honesty in this letter typify her epistolary voice in her most expressive letters. In a letter to Scofield Thayer dated July 20th, 1921, Vivien's play with language creates a witty, intimate tone with phrases like "excuse the alliteration," "she does *not* wish [...] to spill her cash for the cause of Literature" and "Well, go and frizzle."³³ At the end of her Tuesday August 23, 1921 letter to Henry Eliot, she urges her own theory of "personality" in writing: "Write at once and don't wait '*for the mood.*' The mood *comes*, in writing [...] And *be personal*, you must be personal, or else its [sic] no good."³⁴ As these letters indicate, Vivien's epistolary style is marked by her play with language, her intimate tone, and her drive toward candid personal communication.

The letters also reveal the collaborative nature of her life with her husband – they often wrote postscripts or jotted informal notes at the ends of one another's letters and continually refer to reading one another's correspondence.³⁵ Vivien noted in her angry letter to Richard Aldington on July 15, 1922 that, "Tom always leaves his letters behind for me to read" and also reveals her tendency to try to take the blame for any disagreements Eliot has with his literary friends: "Quarrel with me if you like, and send me any kind of letter, or no letter at all – to show your scorn for my interference."³⁶ The published correspondence of both Eliots reveals their mutual intellectual engagement

with works of the current moment (*Ulysses*, *Babbitt*, etc.) and Tom often praises Vivien's opinion of a new work and describes her as "invaluable" to his work on *The Criterion*.³⁷

Their efforts at intellectual collaboration (especially during the time of the composition of *The Waste Land*) seem to have been some of the most fulfilling aspects of their marriage. Vivien writes poignantly about the publication of *The Waste Land* in a letter to Sydney Schiff on October 16th, 1922: "Perhaps not even you can imagine with what emotions I saw *The Waste Land* go out into the world. It means to me a great deal of what you have exactly described, and it has become a part of me (or I of it) this last year. It was a terrible thing, somehow, when the time came at last for it to be published."³⁸ Vivien's account emphasizes her enjoyment of her role as a first reader of the manuscript and suggests that the publication of the poem would somehow "terribly" foreclose the community created through the conversations between herself, Pound, and Eliot in the margins of the drafts. In this letter, Vivien also acknowledges her embeddedness in the poem itself ("or I of it") and seems to suggest the intensity of her involvement with the poem as it circulated in draft form. Additionally, Vivien scrawled on the verso of her heavily annotated draft copy of the poem "Make any of these alterations—or *none* if you prefer. Send me back this copy & let me have it."³⁹ Her comments suggest that she felt intimately connected to the process of revision (although perhaps not overly invested in how much of her voice made it into the final version) and that she desired to preserve the memories or traces (in the physical copy that she marked) of her collaborative efforts. While Vivien found her involvement with the pre-publication poem to be painfully personal, most critics continue to ignore or downplay her role in the life of *The Waste Land*.

The critical neglect of Vivien's contributions to the poem stems not only from the usual story of her personal history (she's often cast as a neurotic, unhappy drain on Eliot, and as a woman whom Woolf bitingly describes as a "bag of ferrets [that] Tom wears round his neck"),⁴⁰ but also from the specific section of *The Waste Land* that she influences the most visibly: the pub scene in "A Game of Chess." The story of Lil and Albert is glanced over and ignored in critical conversation even more thoroughly than is Vivien's co-authorship of these lines. Perhaps the critical neglect of the twin figures of Vivien and Lil stems from the way that Eliot's poem became canonized through the responses of other modernists and through the literary critical establishment as the monument of "high modernism." As Koestenbaum notes: "*The Waste Land* was used to shore up that monolith, the male modernist. Joyce wrote that it 'ended the idea of poetry for ladies,' and Pound commented that 'Eliot's *Waste Land* is I think the justification of the 'movement,' of our modern experiment, since 1900.'"⁴¹ If the history of the cultural reception of *The Waste Land* has cast the poem as a monument to a masculinist version of modernist genius it is not surprising that some critics have strategically downplayed the efforts of one of these poetic "ladies" to insert her voice into the poem's texture.

However, while the gender of Lil and Vivien certainly plays a role in their exclusion from the story of the poem's "Caesarian" delivery, the critical silence surrounding the pub scene also derives from the anomalous readerly desires generated by this section of the poem and by its associations with lower-class and female voices and story-telling. The pub sequence creates intense readerly desires for narrative and then refuses to fully satisfy those desires. In this scene, these narrative desires are inflected by class and by gender and the speaker builds readerly desire to a fever pitch only to

abruptly cut it off. The readerly desire created in the pub narrative is significantly different from other modes of desire and frustration in the poem; the key to this difference involves both the section's intentionally non-lyrical style and its unusual treatment of feminine discourse. Importantly, the pub sequence differs from the larger poem through its use of narrative techniques to create a readerly intimacy with both the female narrator of the story and with Lil (the story's subject). It is no accident that this moment in the poem—the site through which the potentially disruptive elements of lower-class women, of popular culture, of the non-lyrical and less high-brow form of story-telling and of sensational subject matter (intrigue, sexual rivalries, abortions) enter the poem—is also the moment to which Vivien most significantly contributed.

Vivien's most substantial contributions occur in lines 153-164 just after the interruption of the repeated barman's last call, which functions as an insistent reminder of urgency and of the possibility of the truncation of narrative. In these lines, the urgency applies not only to the telling of the tale (the reader desires to have it completed before the bar closes, when the mood will be shifted and the story truncated), but also to Lil's need for urgent action to combat her friend's legitimate sexual threat (Albert has been demobbed and Lil's teeth have apparently not yet improved). In this segment of uninterrupted narrative, the story develops further and becomes increasingly tragic and sordid as the speaker presents the reasons behind Lil's defacement:

If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.
Others can pick and choose if you can't.
But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.
You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
(And her only thirty-one.)
I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,
It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You are a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children? (*ll.* 153-164).

Importantly, in the initial draft of the poem the first line of this excerpt read, “No, ma’am, you needn’t look old fashioned at me,” until Vivien changed the line to “If you don’t like it you can get on with it” by canceling out the line on the draft copy and writing her suggestion in the margin. Vivien’s influence on this section of the poem (she made more substantive changes than Pound or her husband in this section of the drafts) helps to explain the apt characterization of feminine speech within the context of an intimate, although sexually embattled female friendship. While Eliot’s initial line seems to detract from the tacit understanding between the two women, in Vivien’s version there would be no need to explain the look, and thus the line becomes a defensive response (from one who has understood the look) rather than an explication of Lil’s expression. Vivien also helped to dilute several of the least poetic lines and to exorcise some of the anti-lyrical strains of this section: in addition to the clunky “old fashioned” line, Vivien also modified line 159 from the awkward, “It’s that medicine I took, in order to bring it off” to its present, more fluid condition. By editing these lines to make them more succinct and less explicatory, Vivien softened the section’s initial anti-lyrical voice while also increasing the pace (the shorter lines read more quickly and her line changes add additional tone shifts and implications rather than simply further explaining earlier lines) and intimacy (by offering less explanation of the relationship and of the events, she increases the sense of the mutual understanding between the two women and also on the part of the reader) of the narrator’s story-telling style.

Vivien's most important contribution to the meaning of the poem is her revision of the final line of this excerpt which initially read, "You want to keep him at home, I suppose."⁴² This original version of the line makes more logical sense in terms of the previous line, yet it makes less emotional sense in the context of the sexual rivalry and generally unforgiving tone of the speaker. With Vivien's revision (she proposed the change to "What you get married for if you don't want to have children?" in the margins)⁴³, the narrator's brief moment of sympathy in acknowledging that if Albert won't stop impregnating her, "there it is," is immediately subverted by this attitude of annoyance and the assertion that Lil should have known what she was getting herself into. The emotional flipping that occurs midway through the narrator's utterance complicates her relationship to her friend, adding a layer of anger that could be attributed to jealousy, and potentially increasing the reader's interest in the speaker's personal investment in Lil's marriage. The line becomes even more intriguing when one considers that despite this illogical mid-sentence mood-swing, the narrator still incorporates this past speech into her story-telling act at the pub. Again, the motivations and drives of the female speaker-narrator seem to be centered on creating the most dynamic, multivalent, and dramatic story that she can despite any damaging effects the revelation could have to her character or role in the story. She seems bent on recreating the dramatic tension of their conversation and of building up intense narrative desire on the part of her audience as to what will happen to the two entangled friends and to the endangered marriage.

The narrator unfolds the saddest part of her story in these lines that Vivien helped to shape and sharpen. The speaker-narrator evokes a complex register of emotion through her narrative progression: first she reiterates her sexual threat and warning that

Albert will make off with another willing woman, and then chides Lil for “[looking] so antique,” and finally parenthetically reveals the reason for Lil’s deteriorating complexion and teeth. The parenthetical interruptions remind the reader that the speaker is narrating this story in “the present” (i.e. when she narrates it to her audience in the pub) and they also carry a more sympathetic tone as they include details that intensify the pathos of Lil’s early decline. These parenthetical insertions create two temporal levels of the dialogue with two different levels of sympathy: the present degree of pathos enclosed in the parentheses and the past more mixed emotion revealed in the reported dialogue. Lil’s plea for sympathy, “I can’t help it,” and her candid acknowledgement of her abortion and its consequences are met with present sympathy as evidenced by the qualifying bracketed remarks. This divergence in the narrator’s emotional and sympathetic response to Lil suggests a narrative climax that will engender further sympathy; perhaps Lil meets with a tragic end and thus earns the speaker’s increased empathy. In any case, the parenthetical insertions imply a change in the speaker and emphasize the gap between the time of Lil’s conversation with the speaker and the time of the speaker’s current narration of it to the audience in the pub. Eliot’s use of parentheticals draws attention to the time-lapse to increase the reader’s burgeoning narrative desire by implying a meaningful climax that will explain the speaker’s changed opinion. The speaker’s past reaction with its abrupt mood-shifts also suggests that the climax must have been quite intense in order to resolve the malleable and somewhat mercurial emotional relationship between the speaker and Lil. Narrative and female voices are meaningfully linked in this moment—not only through their shared connection to the legacy of nineteenth century novels and print culture—but also through their intertwined presence in the pub narrative sequence.

Goonight, Goonight: The Ends of Narrative in *The Waste Land*

By the moment when the pub scene abruptly ends, the speaker-narrator has already skillfully employed narrative techniques to excite narrative desire in her audience and to pique the reader's sympathy and curiosity. Then the story is cut off at this heightened moment and the last call reasserts its temporal authority, preventing the full disclosure of the narrative just before it reaches its climax:

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night (*ll.* 165-172).

The word "Well" implies that the whole of the previous narrative has been made to set up this newest revelation; it signals that the background, stage-setting phase of the telling has finally led to the climactic moment, presumably the occasion for the story's retelling. The speaker-narrator shifts to the moment when Albert has returned and begins to narrate her experience at the climactic dinner. The phrase "asked me in to dinner" emphasizes the narrator's special relationship with the couple—she is invited into their private domestic space, even to their reunion celebration. The speaker, in turn, invites the reader into the dinner as well to get the "beauty of it hot." The final phrase of the narrative carries the double charge of explaining the excitement of the hot, atypical festive meal and also the narrator's claims to immediacy and to telling it straight so that the reader can experience it "hot" as well. This image also invokes a promise of satisfaction—of sated hunger and of fulfilled narrative desire. The failure of this promise provides the lasting

resonance of the speaker's narrative—the longing for narrative that haunts the remainder of the poem and challenges the seeming closure of the shored fragments and the final shantih.

The Eliots' careful construction of narrative desire accounts for much of the unsettling affect of this passage—the reader's desire is shown to be illicit and perhaps even culpable after it has peaked in intensity. The slurred yet cheery “goonights” of the bar patrons are juxtaposed with the echo of Ophelia's mad goodbye to Hamlet after he has tragically forsaken her and each farewell colors the other. The colloquial “goonights”—which, significantly, are products of Vivien's revisions—become tragically significant both in terms of Lil's plight and possible fate as an Ophelia-like forsaken woman and in terms of the truncation of the story and the readers' lingering unsatisfied desire to know what becomes of her.⁴⁴ Additionally, Ophelia's pathetic end is rendered less uncommon and somewhat demythologized by its similarity to the everyday tragedy of Lil's marriage.

Many critics interpret this contrast of high and low registers to clearly elevate the lofty literary language and neglect to consider the inverse trafficking of meaning. Alison Tate argues that Eliot's inclusion of non-privileged modes of speech (those of women and the lower-class) only serves to exemplify the hierarchical, traditional privileging of ‘male/written/literary’ levels of discourse over the subordinate ‘female/spoken/non-literary’ types of discourse.⁴⁵ She uses the example of the Goonight/Ophelia pairing as a major justification for her claims that the latter types of discourse are subordinated to the former, preferenced “higher” currencies of language in the poem: “This formal and nostalgic second line, with its allusion to Ophelia's farewell in Hamlet, has the effect of

undermining the distinction between styles and genres employed. Isn't the contrast clearly to the disadvantage of the former, which is thus implicitly characterized not just as colloquial, but as degraded, slovenly?"⁴⁶ Tate's argument seems to be based on rather subjective evidence; it illustrates the intensity of the readerly impulse to contain the narrative and lyric desires that the poem creates within a larger, coherent, hierarchical schema.⁴⁷ Yet we might ask why Eliot's juxtaposition of generic registers and manipulation of narrative techniques constitutes, for Tate and many other critics, a privileging of "higher" lyric forms of discourse. Why is this generic complexity of Eliot's poem continually read as an easy dismissal of the "degraded" even "slovenly" voices of the gendered and classed representatives of narrative?

Unlike Tate, I interpret the "lower" register of narrative and of the voice of the pub speaker as not being easily "undermined" by the poem's subsequent shifts into different registers. The desires created through the reader's encounter with the pub narrative are not immediately closed off and disenchanted, but rather remain as a lingering, potent, ever-unsatisfied longing for narrative closure and for further revelation. It is precisely the "lower" register of the lower-class female voices of narrative—and not the high lyric allusive speakers invoked elsewhere in the poem—which create the most intense readerly desires. The progression and truncation of the gendered, working-class, pub-located narrative constitutes the site through which the reader can experience these "different voices" in a way distinct from the pleasures of lyric desire and satisfaction.⁴⁸ Indeed, while there has been a critical tendency, especially within feminist criticism, to associate lyric discourse with revolutionary potential and to associate narrative with authoritarian discourse and repression, in *The Waste Land* the narrative seems to erupt

into the lyric and to create a space for the “different voices” of lower class female speakers to emerge and to disrupt the elite male-dominated allusive lyric discourse that dominates the rest of the poem.⁴⁹

The Eliots’ manipulation of narrative techniques and of the readerly responses produced by the mixing of genres in the pub suggests that narrative modes are central to *The Waste Land’s* poetic response to the conditions of modernity. The poem’s generic mixing asserts that narrative genres constitute an essential element for the “modern lyric” and that poetry as a modern genre must incorporate narrative technology to adequately engage with modern life. Tom and Vivien Eliot use the narrative moment in the pub to bridge the high-low culture divide and to incorporate the voices of women and working-class speakers as part of their version of modern poetry in “different voices.” The narrative moment also allows the Eliots to breed intense readerly desires for narrative development, leaving the reader with lasting longings for narrative fulfillment and creating a rupture in the sense of lyric closure at the poem’s end. Recovering Vivien’s role (through drafts and letters) and looking at the mixing of voices and genders in the production of the text complicates the critical stories that have been told about the production of *The Waste Land*. Just as the pub scene performs a dialogue which involves the mixing of genders, of high and low cultures, and the breeding of narrative desires, the draft of the poem also provided a site for dialogue between Tom, Ezra, and Vivien.

While the pub sequence functions as the most extended narrative moment in the versions of *The Waste Land* published in 1922 and 1923, Eliot’s use of narrative techniques and his allusions to narrative texts are much more pervasive on the pages of

the drafts than they are in the revised published versions.⁵⁰ During the revising process, most of the extended scenes of narrative development were excised from the poem, obscuring the poem's developmental interest in narrative modes. The story of Lil in the pub serves as the major remaining vestige of the larger developmental structure of narrative allusions and moments which function as a recurring motif in the drafts.⁵¹ I am interested in the draft of *The Waste Land* as a unit of production and also as a unit of hermeneutics. Drafts are slippery textual productions and can be difficult to negotiate as objects for literary analysis and seem to raise a host of questions about the purpose of drafts. What is the relationship of a draft to the published versions of a text? What is the function of a draft for the author? How does a draft construct its own readership? While drafts may seem off limits for questions about readers (in that most drafts aren't intended to be read *as drafts* by a wide audience), drafts can function as a place where writers negotiate histories of genre to prepare their texts for a real and specific readership. Genre is the vehicle in drafts through which authors can imaginatively negotiate problems of audience reception and expectations.⁵² By analyzing the drafts as profoundly occupied with questions of genre, we can see that the poem's investment in narrative structures announced by the pub scene in the published versions of the poem also pervades the drafts. In the drafts, Eliot uses narrative beginnings that are eventually rejected and erased from the published versions to generate the lyric moments that remain.

In addition to revealing the cancelled titular allusion to Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, the drafts of *The Waste Land* emphasize Eliot's use of fiction as a source of inspiration for his poem in another elided allusive gesture in the initial title of the "A Game of Chess" section: "In the Cage." That title looks back to Henry James's story

narrating the unorthodox reading practices of a young female telegraphist and conjures up another working class reader who imaginatively spins narratives from the coded messages that she transmits. While there has been some critical disagreement about the reference of this title—many follow Valerie Eliot’s note in her edition of the drafts which point to Sibyl’s cage and others like Michael Levenson have pointed to James’s story as the title’s source⁵³—I argue that Eliot alludes to James’s tale because of the specific phrasing of the line (i.e. not in “a cage” as the translated Sibyl complains – but “In the Cage” which echoes exactly the phrasing of James’s title). Additionally, Eliot’s substitution of “A Game of Chess” (referencing Middleton’s text) gives weight to the idea that Eliot was searching for a title of an older text to function as the title of this particular subsection. Furthermore, the content of the section points both to working-class story-telling and to unsatisfying upper-middle class romances—two central themes in James’s text. In James’s narrative, the telegraphist transforms telegrams—the coded terse messages that epitomize communication under the urban conditions of modernity—into romances and fantasizes about her role as the ideal reader, the one who cracks the code. Eliot’s allusions to fictional readers who imaginatively transform modern scraps (newspapers and telegrams) into compelling narrative performances (i.e. Sloppy’s different voices and the telegraphist’s cracking of the lovers’ code) further suggest that Eliot wanted his poem to grapple with the types of readerly performances and desires engendered by narrative techniques.

Narrative techniques and formal gestures can also be found in the initial opening lines of the poem which narrate the sequence of events that take place during a night of drinking. On the pages of the drafted typescripts, these lines of nostalgic retelling are

colored by the initial epigraph's allusion to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and the question it poses which mixes memory and desire: "Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge?" The juxtaposition of Conrad's "weighty"⁵⁴ question and conclusion ("The horror! the horror!") with the lighter, humorous multi-voiced retelling of an eventful night out on the town creates a strange mood that blends high and low tones and poetic registers. By opening the poem with these multiple narrative allusive traces, Eliot opens up a space for the tension between high and low cultural forms; the poem, the novel, the popular song, and the music hall are all competitive forms of modern culture and entertainment and are all immediately presented in the poem's initial opening gestures. As Badenhausen suggests, Ezra Pound may have been uncomfortable with the overall effect of the initial opening movement and its jumble of voices: "Similarly, part of Pound's discomfort with *Heart of Darkness* (and Eliot's initial attraction to it) may have resulted from the complex narrative frame in that novel, which leads to an intentional confusion of voices, a feature Pound tried to eradicate."⁵⁵ After Pound's and Eliot's revisions (Pound counsels the excision of the Conrad quote and Eliot decides against the opening narrative sequence), the poem's interest in narrative techniques becomes somewhat obscured and hidden by the revised highly lyric, mythical and epic opening gestures (with the grand universalizing title, the Sybil's lament, and the echoing "April" of Chaucer).

In the drafted opening lines, Eliot begins his poem by invoking narrative techniques to retell a sequence of events and announces his novelistic pursuit in his first word: "First." By invoking the word "first," Eliot prepares his readers for a narrative sequence which begins at a discrete starting point ("First we had a couple of feelers down

at Tom's place") and which progresses through a series of smaller events and then finally comes to a climax and to some sort of resolution. Additionally, the opening "First" heralds the poem's initial descriptive mode: the voice in the opening lines will describe the sequence of events (the timing of the story) and will also describe the details of the sequence carefully; this narrative technique of providing a lot of rich descriptive detail (especially in terms of the different "characters" in the story) begins in the second line: "There was old Tom, boiled to the eyes, blind." The "First," "There was" and the multiple "Then(s)" used in these opening lines draw from narrative techniques of storytelling and the poetic speaker functions as a narrator who builds his description of the events to retell a night's adventure.

Like the female storytelling speaker in the pub, the (presumably male) speaker of the opening lines also uses parenthetical insertions to add temporal and emotional layers to his narration. After using the opening two lines to set the moment of beginning at Tom's place and to describe old Tom, the speaker inserts an appeal to his audience ("you") in the form of a parenthetical insertion:

(Don't you remember the time after a dance,
Top hats and all, we and Silk Hat Harry,
With old Jane, Tom's wife; and we got Joe to sing
"I'm proud of all the Irish blood that's in me,
"There's not a man can say a word agin me").
Then we had dinner in good form, and a couple of Bengal lights."

In these lines, the parenthetical gesture functions very differently from the speaker's insertions in the pub sequence because the addressee seems to be included in the "we" of the narrated past. By including the addressee as a joint witness of the past events (a party to the world of old Tom), Eliot uses this parenthetical insertion to call up two distinct temporalities: not the present and the past as in the pub, but instead two different pasts

(both involving the “we” and “old Tom”) which imbue the narrative with a sense of shared nostalgia and intimacy between the speaker and the addressee. The recurring “Then” after the parenthetical insertion continues to build the narrative and to structure the verse into a presumably linear chronology of events, but the insertion complicates the sense of time in the story. Here the parentheses functions as an appeal to jog the memory of someone who was once there (i.e. at old Tom’s place) as well. In contrast to the parenthetical insertions of the pub sequence, which suggest character development to dramatize the potential transformative effects of the climax and to spin a good yarn about an unknown alien third party, the insertion here makes a personal appeal to the memory of the speaker to make the narration more intimate and interesting to the speaker who already knows many of the participants in the night’s action. The accretion of distinguishing details, nicknames, and the colloquial nostalgic tone, all contribute to make the narration more intimate for the reader, who is invited to picture both scenes (the past of the story and the past of the memory of “after a dance”) through the thickening of descriptive details like “Silk Hat Harry” and “Bengal lights.”

Throughout this drafted opening section, the lines continually begin with references to the temporal movement of the narrative: “When we go into the show,” “The next thing we were out in the street,” “Then we thought we’d breeze along,” “Then we lost Steve.” By structuring the openings of his lines with these reiterated references to the temporal progression of the narrative, Eliot emphasizes the novelistic and story-telling qualities of this initial opening gesture. Additionally, the “different voices” announced by the Dickens’ allusion crop up in the strange interlude enclosed within the second parenthetical which seems to be in the voice of Steve (who also mimics the voice

of Myrtle). We can read “Steve” as the speaking “I” here because the parenthetical insertion is presented in quotes, comes directly after the “we lost Steve,” and begins “I turned up an hour later down at Myrtle’s place.” Over the course of the sixteen line parenthetical insertion, Steve retells his encounter with Myrtle (the madam). Like the speaker in the pub in “A Game of Chess,” Steve re-presents a lot of Myrtle’s speech: “What d’y’ mean, she says, at two o’clock in the morning . . . she says, I’ve kept a decent house . . . I’m going to retire and live on a farm, she says.” Again this interlude seems to fill in or briefly sketch out the character of Steve (as the character of Tom was earlier fleshed out with a memory) through the quoted snippet of Steve’s voice and through his parroting of Myrtle (the idealistic yet giving prostitute madam). The repeated “she says” and the implied context of the brothel suggest a similarity with the sordidness of Lil’s situation (the sexual threats and the bodily decay) and Steve’s mimicry of Myrtle’s speech culminating in “Myrtle was always a good sport” (revised into “always treated me white”) suggest that Steve (like the pub-speaker) enjoys retelling the story (and perhaps relishes “doing it in different voices” as the pub speaker prides herself on not mincing words).

The “police” from the Dickens allusion appear in line thirty-five of the drafts when the speaker introduces a “fly cop”: “We’d just gone up the alley, a fly cop came along, / Looking for trouble; committing a nuisance, he said, / You come on to the station. I’m sorry, I said, / It’s no use being sorry, he said’ let me get my hat, I said.” In these lines, Eliot again emphasizes the narrative elements of the scene by including the back-and-forth reported dialogue and the repeated references to who said what (“he said,” “I said,” etc.). Here the poem’s speaker is actually embodying the Dickens allusion and

doing the police in different voices (by “reporting” the language and words of the fly cop during the exchange). The verbal exchange is rendered comical by the stern seriousness of the cop who repeats the clichés of a by-the-book policeman—listing offences and speaking like a parent scolding a naughty child (“It’s no use being sorry”). The potential climax of the speaker’s pending arrest is then interrupted by another climax—the arrival of Mr. Donovan: “Well by a stroke of luck who came by but Mr. Donovan.” As in the pub sequence, here the “Well” seems pivotal in terms of the turning point of the story: the arrival of the savior of Mr. Donovan who gets the speaker out of trouble with the cop by claiming, “These gents are particular friends of mine.” Unlike the story told in the pub scene (which gets abruptly cut off just after the “Well”), this narrative continues after this apparent climax and begins to seem like one long string of events (the “Then(s)” and “The next thing(s)” continue even after the seemingly climactic “Well”). The ending to this opening gesture similarly falls flat—“So I got out to see the sunrise, and walked home”—and seems like an anticlimactic falling away from the potential climaxes and from the repeated insistence on the importance of the order of events. The let-down of the end result of the story (“So ...”) raises questions about if this sequence was even worth narrating and about the point of this moment of story-telling.

Perhaps the uneven development of this narrative gesture is simply evidence of the roughness of the draft (which includes many potentially unsavory moments which were perhaps thankfully purged by the revising efforts of Eliot and Pound) and contributed to Eliot’s decision to cut it altogether. However, it seems interesting that with the host of cancelled allusions to narrative texts and with the repeated narrative techniques first used in this section (and then later retained in the pub sequence) that Eliot

initially began the poem with a gesture of narrative failure (a story with no point, no real climax, no meaningful character development, etc). While the narrative woven expertly by the speaker in the pub retains its dramatic intensity and potentially creates a longing for narrative closure because it is abruptly cut off at the moment of climax, the story here winds down into the commonplace and potentially pointless ramblings of a drunken night. Possibly, Eliot's experiments with and dissatisfaction with narrative techniques in the opening lines made the more tightly wound storytelling of the pub speaker possible and led to the truncation of the narrative moment as a means of heightening the readerly desires for narrative closure.

In contrast to these opening lines, which were drafted and then cut by Eliot alone, the narrative in the pub sequence was tightened and improved through the collaborative revisions of both Pound and Vivien and perhaps the circulation of the poem to this pre-audience can explain the more effective employment of narrative technique and the heightened dramatic intensity in the pub sequence. Also, the content of the narrative moments may have influenced their respective functioning in the poem; in other words, the intense pathos of the story of a lower-class female subject (Lil) told by a similarly working-class, performative female speaker may have proved to be a more effective subject for the poem's narrative experimentation than the comedic wanderings of drunken privileged male youths amongst bars and brothels.

Similarly, the early draft versions of "Death By Water" contain a long narrative telling of an unfortunate ship where bad omens keep happening in a sequence of worsening steps: "Thereafter everything went wrong," "Then the main gaffjaws / Jammed," "And then the garboard-strake began to leak," "The crew began to murmur,"

“So this injurious race was sullen, and kicked,” “So the crew moaned,” “Then came the fish at last,” “So the men pulled the nets.” Like the story of drunken revelry, this narrative reads like a string of events (most lines beginning with a word signaling sequential progression) about a group of men which never fully tightens into an effective narrative development with a clear moment of narrative climax (the white line with bears on it never really becomes clarified into a turning point and the revelation is obscured into the cryptic line, “there is no more noise now”). Although the narrative traces and gestures that cluster together in the draft versions of the poem are not exclusively related to feminized or “low” forms of culture, in the later published versions the pub scene forms the major narrative development of the poem and emphasizes the association of narrative techniques with female speakers and with working-class subjects and “low” genres like bar-room oral story-telling.

In the eventually excised couplets concerning Fresca, Eliot again raises these questions of the relationship between gender and the production of culture and figures Fresca as a female reader and dilettantish poet. Interestingly, despite their excision from the poem, these lines later circulated more publicly in the *Criterion* when they later get published under “F.M” (one of Vivien’s pseudonyms)⁵⁶ and also functioned as a private joke between the poem’s pre-audience (Tom, Vivien, and Ezra) who knew the history of the lines from the pages of the drafts. In these lines, Eliot sketches a slightly comedic portrait of a woman reading and writing within the domestic space of her boudoir. Here Fresca seems to stand in for the threatening scribbling women of mass culture whose crudeness and vulgarity (her “hearty female stench”) are used to render her intellectual aspirations highly comical (according to the note, the lines were meant to parody Pope’s

Rape of the Lock yet here the mock epic centers around a woman reading and writing in her domestic space). The scene here suggests a different means of circulation for texts within a domestic space controlled by women (the wealthy scribbling Fresca and her “coarsened” servant Amanda). Yet within these couplets, texts circulate in feminized, domestic realms only in debased ways. Fresca reads Richardson while defecating and the tale only serves to “ease her labour” (i.e. the famous novelist becomes degraded into toilet-reading): “Fresca slips softly to the needful stool, / Where the pathetic tale of Richardson / Eases her labour till the deed is done.” Fresca then reads the *Daily Mirror* while eating in bed and then “devours” her letters. Here feminized cultures of reading are rendered almost obscene by their associations with the daily routines of the female body (eating and defecating) and by their assimilation into the feminized domestic routines of a morning toilet and of daily correspondence.

After associating feminized reading with the vulgar routines of the female body and with the routinized demands of the domestic space, Eliot sketches out Fresca’s brief intellectual history: “Fresca was baptized in a soapy sea / Of Symonds—Walter Pater—Vernon Lee. / The Scandinavians bemused her wits, / The Russians thrilled her to hysterical fits.” By referring to the “soapy”-ness of the first trinity of Victorians and by describing her readerly responses as “bemused” and as “hysterical fits,” Eliot implies that Fresca is not a serious scholar or intellectual reader, but rather a limited, sentimental, emotional highly feminized reader. After listing her reading practices, Eliot asks: “From such chaotic misch-masch potpourri / What are we to expect but poetry? / When restless nights distract her brain from sleep / She may as well write poetry, as count sheep.” Strangely, Eliot aligns Fresca’s sentimental education (through aesthetes and Richardson

and then through Russian novelists) not with popular novel-writing (which might be expected as deriving from the female domestic sphere) but with bad “gloomy tone(d)” poetry. Here poetry becomes degraded as a genre through its linking to the female reader and her bodily routine (as the novel, the newspaper, and the letter were similarly sullied earlier in the passage) – poetry becomes reduced from a high pursuit of the mind to a soporific activity undertaken in the feminized space of Fresca’s bed for the practical purpose of inducing sleep.

During the revising process, most of the extended scenes of narrative development were excised from the poem, obscuring the poem’s developmental interest in narrative modes of understanding. Importantly, the extended moments of narrative development in the drafts often form the initial opening passages of the subsections of the poem (the drunken romp initially opens “The Burial of The Dead,” Fresca begins “The Fire Sermon,” and the tale at sea opens “Death by Water”) suggesting that Eliot used these narrative experiments as means of writing himself into his high lyric voice (retaining the later more lyrical verses while expunging the early narrative ones). Focusing on the pub scene and on Vivien’s collaboration on the pages of the drafts allows us to reconsider the traces of narrative in the drafts of the poem and to rethink the often obscured role of narrative genres in the development of the poem; we can revise our histories of the poem’s composition to assert how the intermixing of genres functioned centrally in the poem’s developmental process.

The interrelation between narrative genres and feminized cultures of reading and circulation gestured at in the pub speaker’s narrative and raised more powerfully in

Fresca's vulgar consumption of texts allows us to think about the influence of a series of female voices (Vivien and her maid Ellen Kelland) and about the poem's circulation in the domestic space of the Eliots' home. By exploring alternate histories of the poem's composition (focusing on Vivien (and Ellen) instead of Pound) and pre-circulation (focusing on the dialogue on the pages of the drafts), allows us to reposition questions of genre and gender as central to the poem's making and circulation.

As I have argued, Vivien's role in the poem's composition and particularly her role in the shaping of the key remnant of the narrative beginnings of the poem—the pub sequence—was central to the development of female voices and to the intensity and complexity of the speaker's storytelling technique. Vivien served not only as a collaborator in the composition of the poem but also as an important member of the poem's pre-audience (along with Pound of course) who valued the intellectual exchange enacted on the pages of the draft and who wanted to preserve her connection to that exchange by retaining the marked copy of the drafts (as mentioned before she wrote “Make any of these alterations—or *none* if you prefer. Send me back this copy & let me have it.” on her annotated copy of the pages that became “A Game of Chess”). While many critics have argued for Pound's mammoth importance as the poem's first reader,⁵⁷ Vivien's role as the poem's first female reader who also pre-viewed the text in the context of her domestic life and who received and responded to the text alongside her more mundane feminine domestic duties of correspondence (writing Eliot's mother about the state of his socks, etc) has been understudied. Vivien's status as a Fresca-like figure (indeed as the woman who eventually publishes a revised version of the Fresca couplets under her own pseudonym in Eliot's journal) might make us reconsider the potential

harshness of those couplets' judgment of female readers and take her desires to retain the physical embodiment of her participation with the poem (the marked copy of the draft) more seriously as an embodied connection to reading and to the compositional process. In a letter to his brother, Henry Eliot, dated 13 Dec 1921 and sent from Lausanne, Eliot commends Vivien's role in his life during the time while he was working on *The Waste Land*: "The great thing I am trying to learn is how to use all my energy without waste, to be *calm* when there is nothing to be gained by worry, and to concentrate without effort. I hope that I shall place less strain upon Vivien, who has had to do so much *thinking* for me."⁵⁸ Eliot's strange comment, coupled with his other remark while working on the poem that he "must wait for Vivien's opinion as to whether it is printable," suggests that for Tom Eliot Vivien's role as a judge and pre-audience for the poem was as vital to the poem's birthing as Pound's caesarian contributions.

While Pound's editorial pen continually refers to Joyce (canceling lines and phrases like "yes" which are too reminiscent of the competing novelistic man of genius), Vivien may have drawn from her experience of her domestic life in her revisions of the pub sequence—she may have edited the pub speaker's narrative with her ear attuned to the voice and stories of her maid Ellen Kelland. According to Valerie Eliot's note in her edition of the drafts, Eliot told her that these lines were "pure Ellen Kelland."⁵⁹ Additionally, Carole Seymour-Jones attributes the pub dialogue to a secondary collaboration through conversations between Vivien and Ellen: "The dialogue was based on many conversations with Ellen Kelland, the Eliots' maid for many years, to whom Vivien was devoted. The grim future Vivien predicted for Ellen, who was later to marry one of her 'followers', is captured in lines given to 'Lil' and her friend, and edited by

Vivien, whose ear for dialogue was acute.”⁶⁰ While Seymour-Jones’ account is somewhat unsupported (she gives no evidence for her reading of these lines as “captur[ing]” Ellen’s “grim future” and does not substantiate what she means by “followers” or cite any sources for these insights), it does suggest the importance of Ellen’s role in the Eliot’s household and particularly in their picturing (and voicing) of the working-classes.

In a letter to Eleanor Hinkley (dated June 17, 1919), T.S. Eliot references “the servant” (presumably Ellen who is their only servant who is referred to by name in his published correspondence) and seems to delight in her play with language: “the servant is also taking a fortnight’s holiday at Margate, presumably making herself ill on prawns and winkles. But as she says of everything ‘it makes a change’ (i.e. when she bakes potatoes instead of boiling them).”⁶¹ Eliot’s playful use of reported speech here to show Ellen’s style of expression suggests his interest in the peculiar idiosyncrasies of working-class female voices and particularly in the nuances of Ellen’s voice. In a letter to his mother on 14 April 1921, Eliot mentions Ellen again and encourages his mother to relax during her stay with them: “You are of course to have breakfast in bed every morning, the later the better, for Ellen!”⁶² Again, Ellen’s habits and personality become a sort of useful joke in Eliot’s letters (first to make witty conversation with Eleanor Hinkley and now to reassure his mother about her relaxation and comfort during her stay with the couple). Vivien’s feelings about Tom’s interest in Ellen are somewhat cryptically reflected in her letter to Mary Hutchinson dated December, 20, 1921: “Tom kept on Ellen. *He would.*”⁶³ Vivien’s comment is somewhat inexplicable (especially given Seymour-Jones assurance of Vivien’s devotion to Ellen) but it does suggest some tacit understanding between Mary

Hutchinson and Vivien about Ellen's role in the domestic space of the Eliots' home. While the full account of Ellen's impact on the pub scene may not be recoverable, the brief glimpses we have through the letters suggest the Eliots' verbal exchanges with Ellen within the domestic space of their home contributed to their presentation of lower-class female voices in *The Waste Land's* pub scene. Rather than anxiously excising any potential Joycean echoes, Vivien may have drawn from her domestic encounters with Ellen to enhance the reported dialogue and storytelling progression in the pub sequence.

As I have argued, Vivien's role in the poem's composition and particularly her role in the shaping of the key remnant of the narrative beginnings of the poem—the pub sequence—was central to the development of female voices and to the intensity and complexity of the speaker-narrator's storytelling technique. Vivien complicates the emotional exchange between the speaker-narrator and Lil with her revised lines (“If you don't like it you can get on with it” and “What you get married for if you don't want to have children?”) and increases the authenticity of the dialect-inflected voices (with her revised version “It's them pills I took, to bring it off” and her suggested “goonights”). In addition to her role as a collaborator in the composition of the poem, Vivien also plays a key role as important member of the poem's pre-circulation audience (along with Pound of course). She valued the intellectual exchange enacted on the pages of the draft and even wanted to preserve her connection to that exchange by retaining the marked copy of the drafts (as mentioned before she wrote “Make any of these alterations—or *none* if you prefer. Send me back this copy & let me have it.” on her annotated copy of the pages that became “A Game of Chess”). In a letter to his brother, Henry Eliot, dated 13 Dec 1921

and sent from Lausanne, Eliot commends Vivien's role in his life during the time while he was working on *The Waste Land*: "The great thing I am trying to learn is how to use all my energy without waste, to be *calm* when there is nothing to be gained by worry, and to concentrate without effort. I hope that I shall place less strain upon Vivien, who has had to do so much *thinking* for me."⁶⁴ Eliot's strange comment coupled with his other remark while working on the poem that he "must wait for Vivien's opinion as to whether it is printable" suggest that, for Tom Eliot, Vivien's role as a judge and pre-audience for the poem was as vital to the poem's birthing as Pound's caesarian contributions.

In the drafts and in the pub scene, *The Waste Land* exploits the formal tensions of narrative and incorporates the instability of closure often associated with the genre of the novel. D. A. Miller has argued for the underlying tension between the unstable play of the "narratable" (the messiness of a text—the shifting meanings opened up by the erotic and semiotic threads that temporarily destabilize and dominate novelistic narratives) and the forced return to the "non-narratable" (the closed unified world before the text begins and after it ends).⁶⁵ Miller's argument suggests that narrative fundamentally contains a conflict between closure and what it attempts to "close": "It is my hope that the shift of emphasis—from narrative to its underlying impulses in the narratable—will better allow us to identify and account for a central tension in the traditional novelistic enterprise: namely, a discomfort with the processes and implications of narrative itself."⁶⁶ By incorporating the pub narrative, the Eliots utilize the generic instability of narrative itself (the impossibility of ending and of foreclosing the pleasure of narratability) to raise crucial generic questions about the possibilities and potential tensions within the developing genre of modern poetry. Ultimately, I argue that we can usefully place *The*

Waste Land's investment in the generic complexities of narrative itself and in anxieties about containment and closure in dialogue with the poem's explorations of gender, of readerly desires, of different classes, and of high and low cultures to argue for the poem's insistent engagement with the cultural and material conditions of modern writing and reading.

¹ Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, ed. Michael Cotsell (Oxford, UK: Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press, 1989), 198. Later on in the novel, Sloppy has been disguised as a dustman as part of a plan to trick the greed Silas Wegg and boasts of his skill at voices as playing a part in his successful trickery: "'Ha, ha, ha, gentlemen!' roared Sloppy, in a peal of laughter, and with immeasurable relish. 'He never thought as I could sleep standing, and often done it when I turned for Mrs. Higden! He never thought as I used to give Mrs. Higden the Police-news in different voices! But I did lead him a life all through it, gentlemen, I hope I really and truly DID!'" (785). He doesn't directly use his skill with newspaper reading to fool Wegg, but his boast suggests that he values this skill as so clear a sign of his cleverness that he must hide it from Wegg to keep him unsuspecting.

² Lawrence Rainey, *Revisiting The Waste Land* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). David Chinitz, *T.S. and The Cultural Divide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). I agree with Rainey's observation that the poetic formula set out in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" was only one of the possible aesthetic models that Eliot was considering when writing the poem: "Indeed, to read the ten essays that Eliot wrote in 1921 while working on *The Waste Land* is to discern the discontinuous but coherent outline of an aesthetics deeply at odds with the notions of decorum, repose, sobriety, and equilibrium typically associated with neoclassicism. One key word in Eliot's critical vocabulary is 'surprise,' a term he stresses again and again [...] In 1921, [it] was only one of several options facing Eliot, and in relation to *The Waste Land*, "The Road Not Taken" might be the most appropriate title for it. And the road taken? The strange, the surprising, the fantastic, something very near to parody...histrionics" (50-1). Rainey goes on to link *The Waste Land* to the caricature and the music hall and to develop a larger argument about Eliot's use of contemporary typist fiction.

³ Cassandra Laity and Nancy K. Gish, Editors, *Gender, Desire, and Sexuality in T.S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.

⁴ I have found Jameson's theory of the "generic contract" between authors and readers—"Genres are essentially literary *institutions* or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact"—especially useful for considering the function of the narrative elements in Eliot's poem. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 106.

⁵ Heather Dubrow, "The Interplay Of Narrative and Lyric: Competition, Cooperation, and the Case of the Anticipatory Amalgam," *Narrative*, 14 (2006): 256.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁷ Susan Stanford Friedman, "Lyric Subversion of Narrative in Women's Writing: Virginia Woolf and the Tyranny of the Plot," *Reading Narrative: Form, Ethics, Ideology*, edited by James Phelan (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 164.

⁸ James Phelan, "Rhetorical Literary Ethics and Lyric Narrative: Robert Frost's "Home Burial," *Poetics Today*, 25, no. 4 (2004), 634.

⁹ For Phelan, Lyricity, in contrast, involves: "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion for some purpose that something is—a situation, an emotion, a perception, an attitude, a belief; and [...] somebody telling somebody else on some occasion about his or her meditations on something" (635).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 634. Phelan distinguishes between the position of the audience in narrative and the audience's position in the lyric mode: "Furthermore, in [...] lyric, the authorial audience is less in the position of observer and judge and more in the position of participant" (635). In the pub scene, the audience is definitely not allowed to partake of the "participant" role because the speaker is always claiming that she was "there" and implying her authority as witness while the authorial audience can only observe and judge the past events based on the speaker's retelling.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 634.

¹² I agree with Phelan's definition of lyricity as an opposing mode that "is neutral on the issue of change for the speaker—it may or may not occur—and invested less in character and event than in thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and specific situations [...] Thus, the double movement of lyric (that is, of what is represented and of the audience's response) is toward fuller revelation of the speaker's situation and perspective and toward deeper understanding of and participation in what is revealed" (635).

¹³ Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 11. For a further discussion of the tendency of contemporary critics to privilege the lyric as the predominant mode in twentieth century long poems see Susan Stanford Friedman, "Craving Stories: Narrative and Lyric in Contemporary Theory and Women's Long Poems," *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, edited by Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 15-42.

¹⁶ Michael Grant, Ed, *T. S. Eliot: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, vol. 1), 142-143.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

¹⁸ Allison Tate, "The Master-Narrative of Modernism: Discourses of Gender and Class in *The Waste Land*," *Literature and History*, 14.2 (1988 Autumn), 160-171. Tate asserts that: "What we have here is much more a representation of working class dialect than regional dialect. It is one that draws on quite traditional stereotypes – linguistic and non

linguistic – to achieve its effect [...] But rather than single lexical items, the distinctiveness of the language seems to lie in the use of set idiomatic phrases and a particular form of discursive organization associated with oral narration. The markers of oral narrative are worth noting, the frequency of reported speech tags ‘he said’ ... ‘I said’, (14 instances in the first 26 lines) and in the narrator’s impellations: ‘I said – I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself ... He did, I was there ... she said, and gave me a straight look.’ These are forms characteristic of oral story telling.”(166). Tate’s linguistic evidence is compelling, although her larger argument about the scene underestimates the effect of this narrative interlude on the poem as a whole.

¹⁹ Valerie Eliot, Ed. *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1971), 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹ Carol Christ makes an interesting point about the juxtaposition of looking and the grotesque body in this section in her article, “Gender, Voice, and Figuration in Eliot’s Early Poetry” in Ronald Bush, ed. *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1991), 23-37. Christ argues: “A number of the images in ‘A Game of Chess’ reinforce this concern with the desire to look and its repression [...] All of the eyes that do not look ... are juxtaposed to images of a deconstituted body, imagined alternately as male and as female: the change of Philomel, withered stumps of time ... the teeth and baby Lil must lose. As the men in the section resist looking, so they do not speak. Albert is gone, and the speaker cannot or will not answer the hysterical questions of the lady”(33). Perhaps, this emphasis on deflected or problematic gazes and on the disfigured body relates to the possibly distorting or at least transforming gaze of the desiring reader.

²² In the first draft of the poem Lil says “Other women” instead of “Oh is there” until Pound suggested a change and it eventually developed to its present form. In the initial version, Lil seems less indicting of her friend or at least less quick in distrusting her and in catching on to her threats and hints.

²³ Richard Badenhause analyzes Pound’s self-description as it suggests certain psychosexual roles and dynamics within the Pound-Eliot collaboration in *T. S. Eliot and The Art of Collaboration* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Badenhause argues that Pound’s poem suggests his gendering of the editing process as male, which takes an interesting twist when you reposition Vivien in the gendered paradigm of masculine editor/female manuscript: “Pound’s own ‘reading’ of his collaboration on *The Waste Land*, in his whimsical poem ‘Sage Homme,’ emphasizes hierarchy and situates Pound in a dominant position. [...] Although one does not want to make too much of Pound’s ‘Sage Homme,’ as a whole it reveals him intuitively gendering the editorial act, and places him in the dominant, active, male role marking up a passive, feminine manuscript [...] In fact the characterization rang so true with Eliot that he hoped in January 1922 to print Pound’s lines about the caesarean operation ‘in

italics in front' of the entire poem, a move that would have publicly announced collaboration as a norm in modernism (LI 504)" (71). For a fuller account of the homoerotics of the Pound-Eliot collaboration see Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

²⁴ Koestenbaum, *Double Talk*, 114, 123.

²⁵ Valerie Eliot, Ed. *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts Including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1971).

²⁶ Badenhause, *Art of Collaboration*, 87-88.

²⁷ Badenhause focuses almost exclusively on the Criterion "Letters of the Moment" 1 and 2 and on the psychosexual dynamics of the Eliots' collaborative relationship shown in these letters.

²⁸ Loretta Johnson, in her article "A Temporary Marriage of Two Minds: T.S. and Vivien Eliot" (*Twentieth Century Literature*, 34.1 (Spring 1988), 48-61), is very brief in her assessment of Vivien's annotations to *The Waste Land*, simply stating the changes Vivien makes to "A Game of Chess" and saying that they are "more convincing" than the lines Eliot had originally drafted. Similarly, Loretta Johnson focuses on Vivien's published work that appeared in the criterion between 1924 and 1925: "There were twelve contributions—sketches, short stories, letters, reviews, and a poem—by authors with names beginning "F. M." Eliot explained in a letter to Ada Leveson in 1925, 'I believe you must have guessed that all the contributions signed F – M – are by Vivien Eliot'" (50). Johnson's article mainly discusses these contributions to *The Criterion* as biographically relevant semi-autobiographical sketches of unhappy women and their marriages. In his article in *Prose Studies*, 10.1 (May 1987), "And still she cried": Vivienne Eliot's Pseudonymous Prose Contributions to *The Criterion*," Victor P. H. Li argues against reducing Vivien to purely biographical study. Li makes an interesting argument for the generic implications of Vivien's "double-voiced discourse": "Vivienne Eliot's pseudonyms and "feminine" prose sketches are forms of critical mimicry in which certain "gender generic" assumptions are ostensibly adopted only for them to be revealed as inadequate or limiting" (74-75). While Li's statements are quite interesting, he doesn't address how her challenging of these gender and generic assumptions might apply to her collaborative work on *The Waste Land*.

²⁹ Badenhause, *Art of Collaboration*, 97.

³⁰ Carole Seymour-Jones, *Painted Shadow: A Life of Vivienne Eliot*, (London: Constable, 2001), 301. Like many other critics, Seymour-Jones focuses almost exclusively on the emotional life of Vivien Eliot (briefly mentioning her creative bursts, but mainly as symptoms or contributing factors to her unhappiness) and surprisingly does not seem to want to revise the Eliot-Pound "birthing of modernism" story.

³¹ T.S. Eliot, *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. 1, ed. and selected by Valerie Eliot (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 492. Of course this style may only typify the letters we have published.

³² *Ibid.*, 157.

³³ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 466.

³⁵ In a letter to Pound on June 27th, 1922, Vivien describes her illness and her symptoms with sort of a wry sense of humor: “First of all, Colitis. This is, I am told, a symptom in itself. It may apparently be a symptom of anything, nobody seems to know what [...] This is an extremely stupid letter.” TSE wrote a postscript: “Vivien has shown me this letter and I think it is *quite inadequate* as a description of her case” (533).

³⁶ Eliot, *Letters*, 544.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 462.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 584.

³⁹ Eliot, *Facsimile*, 15.

⁴⁰ Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. III, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977). The full quote reads: “But oh—Vivienne! Was there ever such a torture since life began,—to bear on one’s shoulders, biting, wriggling, raving, scratching, unwholesome, powdered, insane. . . .This bag of ferrets is what Tom wears round his neck” (6).

⁴¹ Koestenbaum, *Double Talk*, 111.

⁴² Eliot, *Facsimile* 15.

⁴³ Eliot shortened this suggested line, omitting Vivien’s “to have,” in the published versions of the poem.

⁴⁴ Eliot, *Facsimile* 15.

⁴⁵ Alison Tate, “The Master-Narrative of Modernism: Discourses of Gender and Class in *The Waste Land*,” *Literature and History*, 14, no. 2 (1988), 163.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁴⁷ As J. Hillis Miller notes in his influential reading of the poem in *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth Century Writers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of the Harvard University

Press, 1965), it is easy to doubt one's interpretation of *The Waste Land* precisely because of the strong desire to create a narrative for oneself: "'The Waste Land' works by the abrupt juxtaposition [...] The meaning emerges from the clash of adjacent images or from a line of action which the reader creates for himself. The poem works like those children's puzzles in which a lion or a rabbit emerges from nowhere when the numbered dots are connected in sequence. Who is to say that the animal is really there? It may be an illegitimate patterning of what is in fact without pattern."⁴⁷ As Miller's image of phantom meaning suggests, readers of *The Waste Land* have continually projected their own desires for narrative closure and fulfillment into their evaluation and interpretation of the poem. As Louis Menand avers in *Discovering Modernism: T. S. Eliot and His Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Eliot's notes to the text also foreground and perhaps sharpen this readerly desire for interpretation, for master structure, and for teleological closure: "It is, to begin with, a poem that includes an interpretation—and one 'probably not in accordance with the facts of its origin'—as part of the poem, and it is therefore a poem that makes a problem of its meaning precisely by virtue of its apparent (and apparently inadequate) effort to explain itself" (89).

⁴⁸ In her recent book, *Genders, Races, and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry, 1908-1934*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), Rachel Blau DuPlessis articulates the gender dynamics that complicate traditional lyric structures of meaning: "One of the key narratives that constructs traditional lyrics is 'masculine, heterosexual desire,' with its interests in a silent, beautiful, distant female object of longing [...] there is often a triangulated situation in the lyric: an overtly male "I," speaking as if overheard in front of an unseen but postulated, loosely male "us" about a (Beloved) "she""(29). If we accept DuPlessis's assertion that triangulated desire lies at the heart of the structure of the traditional lyric, then how might we interpret the pub scene as enacting a distinctly different dynamic with an overtly female speaker, reporting female-to-female discourse, as if overheard to an audience of both genders (Bill, May, Lou and "us") about a rival (yet perhaps also beloved) Lil? Perhaps, by inverting the traditional lyric gendering (of both reader and speaker), Eliot hopes to explore the possibilities offered by the non-lyric mode of narrative.

⁴⁹ See Susan Stanford Friedman, "Craving Stories: Narrative and Lyric in Contemporary Theory and Women's Long Poems," *Feminist Measures: Soundings in Poetry and Theory*, edited by Lynn Keller and Cristanne Miller (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 15-42. Unlike the many critics whom Friedman sees as privileging the lyric as the site of potential feminist power, I would argue that relationship between the lyric and narrative relationship in *The Waste Land* shows that in this case it is actually the narrative that is a more powerful avenue for expressing the female, un-patriarchal, un-authoritarian voices in the poem. The pub scene narrative resists fitting in with the order of the lyric sequences that compose the rest of the poem and as a moment of resistance seems more linked to revolutionary potential. The use of narrative in the poem contradicts the usual association of lyric with freedom of speech and narrative with authoritarian control and masculine power that Stanford Friedman describes as a common critical opinion.

⁵⁰ The drafts of *The Waste Land* emphasize Eliot's use of fiction as a source of inspiration for his poem as illustrated by another elided allusive gesture in the initial title of the "A Game of Chess" section: "In the Cage." That title looks back to Henry James's story narrating the unorthodox reading practices of a young female telegraphist and conjures up another working class reader who imaginatively spins narratives from the coded messages that she transmits. While there has been critical disagreement about the reference of this title—many follow Valerie Eliot's note in her edition of the drafts which point to Sibyl's cage and others like Michael Levenson in *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984) have pointed to James's story as the title's source—I argue that Eliot alludes to James's tale because of the specific phrasing of the line (i.e. not in "a cage" as the Sibyl complains – but "In the Cage" which echoes exactly James's title for his tale of the telegraphist). Additionally, Eliot's substitution of "A Game of Chess" (referencing Middleton's text) gives weight to the idea that Eliot was searching for a title of an older text to function as the title of his poem's subsection. Also the content of the section points both to working-class story-telling and to unsatisfying upper class romances—two themes in James's text. In James's narrative, the telegraphist transforms telegrams—the coded terse messages that epitomize communication under the urban conditions of modernity—into romances and fantasizes about her role as the ideal reader, the one who cracks the code. Eliot's allusions to fictional readers who imaginatively transform modern scraps (newspapers and telegrams) into compelling narrative performances (i.e. Sloppy's different voices and the telegraphist's cracking of the lovers' code) suggest that Eliot wanted his poem to grapple with the types of readerly performances and desires engendered by narrative techniques.

⁵¹ While Lawrence Rainey argues, in *Revisiting The Waste Land*, that Eliot draws from popular narrative modes of "typist fiction" in the descriptive account of the typist's tryst in "The Fire Sermon," I do not see this moment as participating in the same narrative associations and readerly desires as the pub sequence. Unlike the multiple female voices which emerge in the pub scene, the typist's voice is unheard and all is told by the detached, third-person voice of Tiresias. The highbrow allusion to Tiresias as the lyric (and potentially epic) speaker who has perceived the scene reduces the narrative drive of the moment. Rainey argues that Eliot draws from the:

[...] topoi of contemporary journalism and realistic fiction which treated typists: a single room with cramped conditions, poor food, a bed that doubles as a couch or divan, references to female garments. *The Waste Land* evokes them all in the eight lines of its first tableau [...] Subject matter is being stressed here: details of setting, the props of the realist and naturalist novel, are being summoned. And the voice of the poem itself, Tiresias, directs our attention to this fact: "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs / Perceived *the scene* ..." (italics mine). We are, in short, in a play or novel about a typist, and the plot line is predictable ("...and foretold the rest"). (61)

Conversely, in the pub-scene the plot-line is unpredictable – the speaker builds suspense and when the narrative gets cut off violently there is no possibility of simply filling in the

blanks. For Rainey, the predictable plot of the typist becomes tragic and as “automatic” as the movement of her hand: “The ineffable is that sense of immense commiseration, at once a profound pity at the lacerating horrors of modernity and an unspeakable sorrow that there is no language, whether in narrative or lyric (epitomized by repetition), adequate to the terror which the poem wishes to account for”(70). While Rainey views Eliot’s narrative gestures in the creation of the typist as formulaic and thus emblematic of the pathetic, automated, plottedness of modernity, I argue that the narrative gesture in the pub resists such a reading and instead opens up a space of open-ended pleasurable readerly desire. It is precisely the un-plottedness of the pub speaker’s narrative that elicits the reader’s interest and the instability of the narrative (the pub-call’s reminder that at any moment it will be cut off) that stimulates the reader’s desires.

⁵² In *The Sacred Wood*, Eliot discusses formal experimentation and generic mixing when pondering his age’s lack of poetic drama: “To create a form is not merely to invent a shape, a rhyme or rhythm. It is also the realization of the whole appropriate content of this rhyme and rhythm” (36). He also comments on the “temper of the age” or “a preparedness, a habit on the part of the public, to respond to particular stimuli” as necessary factors in determining which genres are successful in different ages (36). He also comments that it is in the “mixture of genres in which our age delights” and while he doesn’t explicitly discuss the intermixing of narrative and lyric here and instead is more focused on the possibility of the poetic drama, Eliot’s awareness of the public’s desire for hybrid genres and his acknowledgement of the public’s role in shaping the formation of new genres seem to anticipate his later experimentation with narrative techniques in *The Waste Land*(37). T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood and Major Early Essays* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1998).

⁵³ See Valerie Eliot’s note, *Facsimile*, 126. For his reading, see Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of Literary Doctrine, 1908-1922*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁵⁴ Pound advised Eliot to change the epigraph in a letter, stating “I doubt if Conrad is weighty enough to stand the citation.” Cited in Valerie Eliot’s note, *Facsimile*, 125.

⁵⁵ Badenhause, *Art of Collaboration*, 83.

⁵⁶ There is some critical disagreement on whether they were written by Vivien or Tom: Valerie Eliot says they are originally Eliot’s (citing drafted versions in a black exercise book) and Badenhause agrees but others like Carole Seymour-Jones disagree and attribute them to Vivien.

⁵⁷ Badenhause, *Art of Collaboration*, 87: “Pound served as the perfect ‘pre-audience’ for Eliot’s modern epic, allowing Eliot the luxury of testing his material privately in a manner that would facilitate a collaborative conversation, much along the lines of the model established a year earlier in ‘A Brief Treatise on the Criticism of Poetry,’ where Eliot promotes circulating new poetry among a select ‘private audience’ before releasing the material to the larger public.”

⁵⁸ Eliot, *Letters*, 493.

⁵⁹ Eliot, *Facsimile* 125. While Valerie Eliot spells Ellen's surname as "Kellond," Carole Seymour-Jones records the name as Ellen Kelland and I have opted to follow Seymour-Jones.

⁶⁰ Seymour-Jones, *Painted Shadow*, 301-302.

⁶¹ Eliot, *Letters*, 304.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 445.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 497. Interestingly, this is the same letter in which Vivien expresses her feelings about her first meeting with Joyce about whom she remarks: "I have seen Joyce several times and find him a most unsympathetic personality. Vain!! Egoist! Unseeing."

⁶⁴ Eliot, *Letters*, 493.

⁶⁵ D. A. Miller, *Narrative and its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). Miller defines the "narratable" as: "the instances of disequilibrium, suspense, and general insufficiency from which a given narrative appears to arise. The term is meant to cover the various incitements to narrative, as well as the dynamic ensuing from such incitements, and it is thus opposed to the "nonnarratable" state of quiescence assumed by a novel before the beginning and supposedly recovered by it at the end" (*ix*).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *ix*.

Chapter 4

Framing a Dog's Life: Virginia Woolf's "Looking-Glass" Biography of *Flush*

"It is a good idea I think to write biographies; to make them use my powers of representation reality accuracy; & to use my novels simply to express the general, the poetic. *Flush* is serving this purpose."¹

Introduction

Virginia Woolf's writing in the early 1930s—in letters, in essays, in diary entries, and in *Flush: A Biography* (1933)—reflects her preoccupation with the particular offerings of different genres and with negotiating a wide array of publication forums. *Flush*—a slightly off-center text, not generally considered a major part of the Woolf canon—is a key text for my project because it is a site through which Woolf negotiates the complex network of codes that are central to my larger project: codes of print culture, of literary genres, of photography and of illustration, of diverse and unexpected readerships and publication contexts. As I argued in chapter one, Henry James, writing in the early moments of modernism, responded in his short story *The Real Thing* to his illustrated context of publication in *Black & White* magazine and in multiple U.S. newspapers by crafting an un-illustratable sentence and by thematizing problems of illustrating and advertising. In my second chapter, I investigated James's career-long interest in the telegram and argued that he continually returned to telegraphic forms and the networks that produce and disseminate them in his fiction because for him this form of print culture emblemized and energized communication in modernity. The previous chapter has shown how at the apex of high modernism, T.S. Eliot drew on the legacy of

the nineteenth-century print culture of the novel as he employed narrative techniques and female and lower-class voices to generate his formal experimentation in the making of the great modernist “lyric,” *The Waste Land*. In 1933, when creating her Hogarth edition of *Flush*, Woolf decided that in order to redefine the genre of biography at this moment in modernist history and in the development of modern print culture—more than ten years after Strachey’s *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria* exploded nineteenth century biographic conventions—she would experiment with both the visual presentation of her text *and* its verbal dimensions.

At a moment when Woolf was looking back over her already long and famous career—indeed at a moment in which Winifred Holtby was working on a memoir of the esteemed Mrs. Woolf, when Americans were clamoring to buy her manuscripts, when book clubs were badgering her for expensively produced autographed copies of her work—she chose to direct her literary gaze back at her famous precursor, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Woolf chose to experiment with redefining the genre of biography—a project often invested with making the past useful for the present—at a moment in which her own past as modernist writer and Bloomsbury celebrity was very much in the air. Importantly, Woolf used the Hogarth edition of *Flush* to play with the expectations ushered in by the usual packaging of biography for the literary marketplace—the frontispiece image, the birthplace sketch, the illustrations, and the scholarly “authorities” and notes. She re-codes the genre of biography by juxtaposing multiple verbal and visual genres in the material form of her text. At this late moment in Woolf’s career as a writer, as a celebrity, and as a publisher, she is looking back at past forms and at earlier modernist experimentations with making those forms “new;” she is also looking forward

and trying to negotiate how to renovate those codes to work for her current purposes and for her audience's expectations in the early 1930s.

Woolf writes *Flush: A Biography* at a moment in the career of modernism often called "late modernism"—a moment in which modernist authors were looking back over their careers and at their earlier famous experimentations with form and a moment in which Woolf was increasingly aware of how publishing culture prepares and caters to readerly expectations through book design. Woolf exploits her position as self-publisher through the Hogarth Press to play with the expected forms of the bibliographic codes of *Flush: A Biography*. She uses the verbal and visual media in her text to create a complex network of gazes onto her subject Flush and onto her textual and paratextual practice of looking-glass biography. This chapter argues that *Flush* shows us the ways in which, for Virginia Woolf in the 1930s, literary genre was crucially bound up in extra-literary genre. In other words, I hope to show that her project of challenging readerly expectations through the material form of her Hogarth edition was intimately tied to her experimental negotiation of the competing genres of poetry, fiction, and biography in *Flush*.



Figure 4.1: “Frontispiece” to Hogarth *Flush*

Framing the Subject: The Mysterious Case of the Frontispiece

When opening the 1933 Hogarth edition of *Flush*, Virginia Woolf’s “biography” of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s cocker spaniel, the viewer is greeted by a photographic frontispiece facing the title page of the volume (see Figure 4.1). The viewer is confronted by the gaze of the book’s purported subject, the spaniel “Flush,” whose face is dramatically lit and who is prominently posed near the center of the image. While “Flush’s” regal head might be the first thing to catch the reader’s eye, it takes up only a small portion of the frame and the image also focuses the viewer/reader’s gaze onto

“Flush’s” plush surroundings. The voluminous folds of drapery—both the mounds of fabric obscuring “Flush’s” paws and the large decorative silken panels hanging in the background—and the rich array of textures (the lower leftmost fabric giving a dark glossy finish while the lighter fabric is ringed by two bands of scalloped fringe) suggest an atmosphere of lushness and prosperity. The dramatic contrast between the light and dark areas of the image creates a strong horizontal axis that cuts across the frame directly in front of “Flush”; the wall hangings create an intersecting vertical axis in the background which also directs the viewer’s gaze toward the image’s canine subject. Flush’s stance behind the almost white fabric makes his coat appear darker and the contrast between white and black draws the eye to the dividing line between Flush’s body and the mounded drapery. When the viewer looks more closely at this mounded fabric, he or she may experience a jolt of surprise—for upon closer inspection, it is *not* simply a mound of studio drapery, but rather the skirt of a dress concealing the recumbent body of a richly dressed woman. Following the line between “Flush” and the fabric, the viewer can glimpse a pale, almost ghostly arm resting on the similarly hued dress fabric. This arm, peeking out from the darker material of the dress sleeve and circled by a thick, dark bracelet reaches toward “Flush” from the rightmost margin of the image and forms the only sign in the image which suggests the other subject of Woolf’s text: Flush’s famous mistress, the poetess Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

As the subtitle proclaims *Flush* to be a “biography,” the presence of this frontispiece does not perhaps seem initially noteworthy—many biographies published during this era include images of their subjects as frontispieces (generally in the form of reproductions of either painted portraits or photographs).² A frontispiece in a work

announcing itself as a biography seems to claim a privileged status from its position on the threshold of the work; the biographical frontispiece prepares the reader/viewer's expectations for the type of biographical subject which will be developed in the text that follows it.³ For example, in the biography of an eminent author, the choice of a frontispiece image depicting a youthful portrait might indicate the biographer's decision to slant their biographical portrait more toward the artist as a young man. In other words, the frontispiece—as the viewer's initial glimpse of the subject of the biography—points to the particular version of the subject that will be portrayed and suggests the choices and biases of the biographer. Furthermore, the form of the frontispiece—a photographic image or an iconic painted portrait—might signal, respectively, the biographer's interest in the private, “real” life of the biographical subject or in the public life of the person as cultural symbol. A photographic portrait seems to claim to reveal the subject as she or he once was as they sat in front of the lens, while the medium of paint makes no such claims to direct indexicality and often presents the subject as more softened and idealized.

While photographic frontispieces in biographies might seem to allow the viewer to gaze at the biographic subject made solid and somehow tangible through the photographic image which captures them as they looked at an earlier moment in time, the frontispiece to *Flush* offers more mystery than solidity as the subjects in question—the dog pictured and the possessor of the outstretched arm—are *not* indisputably the historical subjects of *Flush: A Biography*. Although the technology of photography was available during the historical Flush's lifetime with Elizabeth Barrett Browning—several studio photographic portraits were taken of Barrett Browning during her life—the unconventional cropping of this photograph to highlight the dog, the non-studio context

of a private living space, and the details in the furniture (the polka-dotted chair in the right foreground) suggest that the image was prepared especially for this volume in the early 1930s. Indeed, although early proofs were captioned with the word “Flush,” the Hogarth Press Manager wrote to correct the captioning, asking the printer to have the “caption “Flush” deleted from the frontispiece and the word “Frontispiece” inserted in small italics ranging with the left hand margin of the picture.”⁴ This early correction suggests that the frontispiece is intended to pose as a portrait of “Flush,” but also to remain somewhat ambiguous about the identity of its subject.⁵ And in a letter from the Hogarth Press to Harcourt Brace concerning the publication of the book in the United States, the press manager makes a point of mentioning that the photo is not of the “real” Flush: “I also send a proof of the jacket we are using, and the photographs for the illustrations. I ought to add that the photograph of the spaniel, which we are using as a frontispiece is not an actual photograph of Flush, but one that we have had taken. We are merely labeling it “Frontispiece.”⁶ At least one careful viewer was disconcerted by the frontispiece’s blurring of Flush’s identity: a short notice about the book in the *Daily Mirror* on the 9th of October, 1933 ends by lamenting: “Our only complaint is that Flush’s memory appears to be maligned by a frontispiece that shows another, to us unknown, spaniel—reposing effeminately on a couch of sorts. Who is it? What can it be? Is it one of Flush’s remote descendents?”⁷

Despite the bold claims of one critic that “surely” Woolf was behind the camera taking the photograph of her spaniel Pinka for the frontispiece image, there seems to be no concrete proof to establish the provenance of the photograph other than the letter from the Press above stating that they “had [the image] taken” for the purpose of the

photograph.⁸ Pinka or Pinker was the golden cocker spaniel Woolf received as a gift from Vita Sackville-West in 1926; she was alive during the time when this image was most likely made, making her a potential poser (see Figure 4.2 of Pinka and Leonard).⁹ Quentin Bell argues for Pinka as the “original of Flush” and recounts Woolf’s unusual affinity for Pinka: “Sometimes, when talking, she would slowly caress Pinka’s nose, thoughtfully stroking it in the wrong direction. She was fascinated by all animals but her affection was odd and remote. She wanted to know what her dog was feeling—but then she wanted to know what everyone was feeling, and perhaps the dogs were no more inscrutable than most humans. *Flush* is not so much a book by a dog lover as a book by someone who would love to be a dog.”¹⁰ While clearly Pinka informed Woolf’s picturing of “Flush” – she is not the only possible poser for the frontispiece image: a letter Woolf wrote to Vita in September of 1931 asking for a photograph of her spaniel Henry suggests an alternative possibility for the frontispiece spaniel’s identity: “have you a photograph of Henry? I ask for a special reason, connected with a little escapade by means of wh. I hope to stem the ruin we shall suffer from the failure of *The Waves*. This is the worst publishing season on record. No bookseller dares buy.”¹¹ Here, Woolf directly links an image of Vita’s dog Henry with her project in *Flush* and with its potential lucrative promise on the bleak literary marketplace. Although this letter opens up the possibility of Henry as the sitter, I think that the extremely staged nature of the photograph—in particular the visual references to the sick-room and sick-bed of Flush’s mistress—suggests that Woolf herself crafted this image for its purpose as the frontispiece (why would Vita have taken such an ideally suited image of Henry?).¹²



Figure 4.2: Photograph of Leonard and Pinka, Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College.

Amazingly, in all of the mystery surrounding the frontispiece's canine subject, not one critic mentions the alluring arm stretching from the right side of the image or mentions that the frontispiece presents the spaniel sitting on (or just behind) the reclining form of a richly dressed woman. This lack of attention to the human presence could be because the faux "Flush" is the clear focus of the image; his direct gaze toward the camera and the lighting's focus on his face place Flush (and *not* the truncated female figure) in the conventional role of a sitter for a portrait. While many traditional painted and photographic portraits include animals by the sides of their masters, this image seems extraordinary in its framing: it cuts off the upper body and head of the reclining woman—a body and head which a reader responding to the dog's implied identity as "Flush" (as the image was listed in the U.S. editions list of illustrations) would believe to belong to Flush's famous mistress, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The cropping seems especially strange and noticeable because so much of the frame is taken up by the woman's reclining body and because her slim white braceleted arm forms perhaps the brightest area in the image; the bright line of the arm (peeking out of the darkly patterned sleeve) leads the eye toward Flush from the rightmost margin of the image drawing attention to the woman's half-presence in the image.

But whose arm is it? It could be Vita's arm if the dog is Henry, but more likely it is Woolf's arm reaching toward Pinka. The composition of the image and the heavy draping of the fabrics on the reclining figure—fabrics which are reminiscent of Woolf's descriptions of Barrett Browning in her invalid state in the back bedroom at Wimpole Street—imply that the possessor of the arm is intentionally posing as Elizabeth Barrett Browning to create the illusion of a photographic window into the life of the "real" Flush

and his famous mistress. The photographer and poser here collaborate to make an image that suggests the living conditions of the historical Flush and his famous mistress while simultaneously undermining this historical link through the modernity of its violent cropping and its twentieth century furnishings. In terms of the genre of the frontispiece, this strange image focuses the reader's/viewer's gaze onto multiple competing temporalities, the Victorian past and the modern moment of the early 1930s, and thus presents the biographical subject of Flush and the oblique subject who extends her arm into the frame as figures negotiating complex relationships with both the Victorian era and modernity.

While there is no conclusive evidence to prove that the arm in question belongs to Woolf, the lack of any correspondence describing and commissioning the making of the image suggests that the image was made at home by Leonard and Virginia who had recently purchased a new camera and who often took photographs of one another as a recreational activity.¹³ As the arm seems to belong to a reclining woman, I argue that it is most likely Woolf's arm posed purposefully while Leonard stood behind the camera. If the arm in question does indeed belong to Woolf, then her act of posing and of temporal-cross-dressing suggests an act of play within the genre of the photographic frontispiece that at other times she feared. While in the *Flush* image Woolf may have experimented with displaying her body under the cloak of anonymity, during the same period in which she would presumably have made this image, she expressed fears about the publication of her own embodied image as a frontispiece in an early biography. In her diary entry for September 16, 1932, Woolf conflates her stress over writing *Flush* and her anxiety over her public portrayal in a memoir's frontispiece:

I'm in such a tremor that I've botched the last—penultimate chapter of Flush—it is worth writing that book--& can scarcely sit still, & must therefore scribble here, making myself form my letters, because—oh ridiculous crumpled petal—Wishart is publishing L.'s snap shot of me instead of the Lenare photograph & I feel that my privacy is invaded; my legs show; & I am revealed to the world (1,000 at most) as a plain dowdy old woman. How odd! I never gave the matter a thought till this morning. I sent the photographs off with some compunction at being too late. Now I'm all of a quiver—can't read or write; & can, rightly, expect little sympathy from L. What an ill joined web of nerves—to be kind—my being is! A touch makes the whole thing quiver. What can it matter? The complex is: privacy invaded, ugliness revealed—oh & that I was trapped into it by Wishart. Lord!"¹⁴

The snapshot in question did serve as the frontispiece for Winifred Holtby's "critical memoir" of Woolf published by Wishart in 1932 (see Figure 4.3) and also later was reproduced (with the legs tastefully cropped out) as the frontispiece for the second volume of Quentin Bell's biography (1972). In this diary entry, Woolf articulates her preference for the Lenare image (see Figure 4.4) with its almost smirking, challenging gaze back at the viewer, its ambiguous studio backdrop, and its ethereal, halo-like lighting rather than the snap-shot image with its revelation of her crossed legs in the foreground, the suggestion of her domestic space in the background, and the far-away look away from the camera which suggests that the photo was taken while its subject was unaware of the lens, caught in a trance-like state of contemplation. Indeed the open notebook or book on her lap suggests that the snapshot image captures "the-artist-at-work"; her strangely twisted position on the chair, seemingly rotated to her side as she rests her book and hands on the chair arm, draws the viewer's attention to Woolf's body and suggest its active participation in her writing process. With its emphasis on the space of her home and on her writing process as embodied and its suggestion that it was a candid snapshot—catching her unawares, as she works—the snapshot does seem to promise the viewer a glimpse of the real day-to-day life of Woolf. Perhaps then it is no

wonder that Wishart chose the snapshot for Holtby's critical memoir which promised readers just such a glimpse of Woolf. And it is also unsurprising that this latter photo and the version of the artist that it circulated so upset Woolf that she could not write and felt violated as the photo "invaded" her "privacy" and projected an undesirable image to consumers of her public image.

Woolf's concerns about the invasive gesture of the frontispiece to Holtby's biography resonate in complex ways with her strange gesture of performative revelation in the *Flush* frontispiece and seem to cluster around fears of being seen as a too-embodied subject (i.e. as having legs and as being "a plain dowdy old woman") rather than as a somewhat ethereal iconic face (i.e. no body, just erudite head, as in the Lenare image (see the contrast below in Figures 4.3 and 4.4)).¹⁵ What does it mean for Woolf to frame her biographical subjects—both *Flush* (pictured through a stand-in spaniel) and Barrett Browning (indexed by her own substituted body)—through the frontispiece's gesture of vexed revelation? While she fears that her own legs will take over the meaning of Holtby's biographical frontispiece and prefers the head and shoulders view, she frames the stand-in Barrett Browning figure as *only* body and legs. Interestingly, in her frontispiece gesture in *Flush*, Woolf's includes her own legs transformed and hidden through allusive gesture; here her legs are covered by shawls and are barely recognizable as legs, and yet they form a prominent mound in the image bisecting the frame. In her staged frontispiece, Woolf uses her legs to stand in for the invalid legs of Miss Barrett, thus camouflaging her own writerly body under the allusion to the sickly body of the 19th-century poetess whose body and personal life—with her famous youthful illness and subsequent miraculous transformation through elopement

with Browning and the flight to Italy—often overshadowed her writing in the popular imagination.



Figure 4.3: Snapshot of Woolf used as frontispiece for Winifred Holtby's *Virginia Woolf* (1932)

LENARE



Virginia Woolf. Circa 1930.

Figure 4.4: Lenare Photograph of Virginia Woolf reproduced in *Lenare: The Art of Society Photography, 1924-1977* (1981).

While the *Flush* frontispiece does imply an almost violent invasion of privacy in the partially revealed yet truncated body of the poser pretending to be Barrett Browning

and in the suggestion that the image was taken from within sanctum of an invalid woman's bedroom, for the eponymous biographical subject—Flush himself—the image is not violating at all. While it does present another dog pretending to be Flush (most likely a female dog if the spaniel is Pinka), the image does present this portrait of “Flush” as dignified by revealing only his most human-like features (his noble head and direct gaze) while the rest of his body (legs, tail, and doggy nether region) is actually hidden from view by the woman's legs. Interestingly, Woolf's concerns over managing her own photographic image and her fears that the reading public will harshly interpret the revelation of her legs suggest that her construction of this falsified image of Barrett Browning also anticipates and plays upon potential readerly desires for authorial bodies.

This frontispiece—with its playful doubling, unusual framing, and strange performance of invasion—experiments playfully with the generic conventions of frontispiece images; this image disrupts the usual functions of the frontispiece as a visual introduction to biography and as a means of generating readerly expectations about the types of biographical subject and of approach that it heralds. Woolf uses the frontispiece to negotiate her complex relationship to her literary past through her substitution as Barrett Browning and through her play with the conventions of biographical frontispieces. She takes up the figure of Barrett Browning—a poet perhaps most widely known to Woolf's audience for her biographical romantic history and her iconographic body—and plays with readerly desires and expectations for a certain type of framing and embodiment. By framing *Flush: A Biography* with this image, Woolf foregrounds the complex network of visual and verbal genres which compete in the material form of her Hogarth edition and also highlights her experimentation within the framework of the

publication practices that produce modern biographies and the readerly expectations that motivate their packaging.

“Mrs. Woolf’s Difficulties”

As Woolf avers in my epigraph, *Flush* did prove to be “worth writing” and the strange book—both in its linguistic code (the words) and in its bibliographic code (the frontispiece, cover design, illustrations, title page, etc)—offered Woolf (and offers us as critics) an opportunity to analyze the intersecting issues of literary genres, of literary and personal connections to the past, of popular reception, and of modern book design and publication practices. On August 16, 1931, Woolf wrote a long entry in her diary (from which my epigraph is excerpted) in which she mentions her impressions as her work on *Flush* was just beginning and as she looked over the proofs for *The Waves*:

I should really apologise to this book for using it as I’m doing to write off my aimlessness; that is I am doing my proofs—the last chapter this morning— & find that I must stop after half an hour, & let my mind spread, after these moments of concentration. I cannot write my life of *Flush*, because the rhythm is wrong. I think *The Waves* is anyhow tense & packed; since it screws my brain up like this. And what will the reviewers say? And my friends? They cant, of course, find anything very new to say [...] L. is in the house making his Index & printing the photographs we developed last night [...] It is a good idea I think to write biographies; to make them use my powers of representation reality accuracy; & to use my novels simply to express the general, the poetic. *Flush* is serving this purpose.¹⁶

In this diary entry, Woolf shows how she was thinking about issues of reception (reviewers and friends) and genre (biographies vs. novels) at the same time as she was reflecting upon the struggles of her own writing body and upon her collaborative experiments with photography. In this passage, she classes *Flush* as biography using the unlikely trio of terms “representation reality accuracy” in contrast to her work in her

“novels” (which she interestingly describes as “poetic”). While “representation reality [and] accuracy” might not be strange words to apply to biographical writing in general, they bear an unexpected relationship to the text of *Flush* which, as a biography of a canine subject from an earlier century, relies mainly on Woolf’s imagination nosing out doggy smells and lusts, bolstered here and there by Barrett Browning’s letters to solidify organizing facts. Importantly, Woolf defines her biographical project against the foils of fiction and poetry despite her reliance on both of these other genres to narrate Flush’s life.

Indeed, Woolf’s attempt at an “accurate” representation of Flush’s life borrows from Barrett Browning’s poetic tributes to Flush, “To Flush, My Dog” and “Flush, Or Faunus.”¹⁷ In her biography, Woolf somewhat aggressively re-writes, fleshes out, and for the most part replaces the versions of Flush presented in Barrett Browning’s two poems about her dog. This imperial gesture functions in part as a displacement of Woolf’s famous literary fore-mother and also as an opportunity for Woolf to weigh the distinct advantages of different genres. Woolf’s story of a dog’s life pushes the boundaries of genre, both of biography and of fiction; in her attempt to *write over* the “Flush” of Barrett Browning’s poetry in narrative form Woolf creates a palimpsestic portrait of Flush that raises questions about what different verbal and visual genres—poetry vs. narrative, text vs. image, biography vs. fiction, photographic frontispiece vs. drawn illustration—can offer her method of overlaid multi-perspectival portraiture.

While most critics have dismissed *Flush* as a joke—largely because Woolf herself once described the endeavor as her desire “to play a joke on Lytton [Strachey]”¹⁸—*Flush* was one of Woolf’s best-selling texts during her lifetime. *Flush* was first published in

serial form in the *Atlantic Monthly* from July to October 1933, without illustrations, and then in book form in October 1933 by the Hogarth Press in England and by Harcourt, Brace and Company in the United States. The book was selected by the Book Society in England for October 1933 and by the American Book-of-the-Month Club as an alternate selection (a category reserved for serious fiction) and it was a best-selling book for the Hogarth Press.¹⁹ Julia Briggs evidences the popular appeal of *Flush* by way of an announcement in *The Daily Mail* that “reassured its readers that those ‘who dread Mrs. Woolf’s ‘difficulties’ need not alarm themselves’ over her latest book”; Briggs notes that “Alison Light has pointed out the irony that ‘what began life as a coterie publication, a private joke, became her most accessible work, perhaps the only one to reach the common reader.’”²⁰ Indeed, the book’s popularity and best-seller status as well as its strange subject matter and often humorous tone may have contributed to the critical dismissal of the text; some critics echo the attitude of several early reviewers and treat the book as a blemish on Woolf’s career, an embarrassing aberration from their more profound, serious versions of Woolf.²¹

Conversely, I argue that *Flush* can be read as an earnest experiment with genre and as a text in which Woolf negotiated competing literary forms as well as the competing visual media displayed in the Hogarth edition’s bibliographic code. *Flush* is an ideal text for historicizing Woolf; it offers us the opportunity to read a critically neglected text back into the context of Woolf’s developing experiments with form and into the context of her active involvement with publishing, with book design, and with multiple facets of print culture. In *Flush*, Woolf places genres in a competitive dialogue and through her formal practice she defines genres relationally against one another. In

her mobilization of competing formal structures and in the book design of the Hogarth edition, Woolf experiments with the expressive possibilities and limitations of different media (biography, poetry, fiction, photography, portraiture, drawings, etc) and with their relative values in the modern literary marketplace.

A little more than a decade before the publication of *Flush*, Lytton Strachey had redefined the project of biography with *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and *Queen Victoria* (1921) and with his treatment of his famous precursors he had toppled the eulogizing myths of these illustrious figures from the past. In contrast, Woolf does not set out to dethrone the idols of the past (her choice of subject, Flush the spaniel (rather than Barrett Browning the poet), indicates her interest in something other than eminence) but to revamp the generic possibilities of biography and to negotiate a complex relationship with the past (particularly with the Victorian era). David Garnett in a review in *The New Statesman and Nation* printed on October 7, 1933, claims that *Flush* is: “the first animal to become an Eminent Victorian.”²² In the context of modernism’s larger project of recycling the past to “make it new,” Woolf’s revolutionary formal practice of biography in *Flush* juxtaposes the old and the new (poetry, fiction, the biographic apparatus, the frontispiece, photography, the birthplace sketch, the portrait, the drawing, etc) to achieve a material textual form that celebrates its own verbal and visual modernity.

Woolf Dissects the Novel-Poem: Developing Genre Theory in “Aurora Leigh”

In “Character in Fiction” (1924), Woolf articulated a complicated theory concerning generic transformations and the intertwined responsibilities of readers and authors; for Woolf, for genres to “evolve” or to catch up to modern subjectivity (i.e. to

capture the changing face of “Mrs. Brown” on the bus for the changing desires and needs of readers) both reader and author must collaborate to re-fashion generic expectations and to progress through “manners” to shared pleasure and intimacy. In her Hogarth edition of *Flush*, Woolf placed contrasting verbal and visual genres in dialogue with one another in order to both emphasize and transform their functioning and to work through the modernist dilemma of making past forms work for modern times and for the demands of modern readers. In the early 1930s, while beginning work on *Flush*, Woolf used her essay “Aurora Leigh” (1932) to reflect upon past forms and their usefulness for her modern moment and in this short critical essay she gravitates toward the figure of Barrett Browning, as she does in *Flush*, to examine the relative potential of different genres.

Woolf began writing *Flush* in July 1931 as she completed *The Waves*; she published the Hogarth edition of the text in early October 1933 when she was deeply absorbed in *The Pargiters*, an experimental novel-essay that eventually became her penultimate novel, *The Years*. During this period, Woolf was also working on her early version of *Three Guineas* (1938), her *Second Common Reader* (1932), and her *London Scene* essays (six descriptive articles on London written for *Good Housekeeping* magazine and published in 1931 and 1932).²³ Interestingly, this array of intertexts includes pieces which look back toward the past through literary criticism (in the *Second Common Reader*) and which focus on the present day “scene” in the modern metropolis of London. In her work in these adjacent texts, Woolf addresses diverse audiences of potential readers by publishing in the popular forum of *Good Housekeeping* and in the more academic *Second Common Reader*, which although addressed to a “common” reader suggests at least a middlebrow, educated audience who would be knowledgeable

about the texts she surveys in her wide-ranging literary criticism. In addition to the temporal adjacency of all of these texts that Woolf was publishing and thinking about at the same time, for several of these texts there was also a more immediate physical adjacency in the material form of the notebooks in which Woolf drafted *Flush*. The pages of Woolf's notebooks visually display the intersections between *Flush* and other texts: Woolf's drafts of the "Authorities" and other drafted sections are interspersed physically and broken up by these other abutting fragments (from the *London Scene* series and from the *Second Common Reader*).²⁴

Woolf's work on "Aurora Leigh," a brief essay on Barrett Browning's novel-poem first published in the *Yale Review* in July 1931 and later incorporated into *The Second Common Reader*, importantly theorizes and dissects the relationship between the competing literary genres that Woolf experiments with in *Flush*. In writing *Flush*, Woolf experiments with the advantages and disadvantages of competing expressive genres, including poetry by incorporating Barrett Browning's short poems about her dog. In her essay "Aurora Leigh," Woolf takes Barrett Browning's longer, mixed genre work—the novel-poem *Aurora Leigh*—as an occasion to analyze the competitive struggle between the genres of poetry and biography, and between poetry and the novel.

In her "Notes" to *Flush*, Woolf somewhat caustically asserts that no one reads Barrett Browning's poetry: "Readers of *Aurora Leigh*—but since such persons are non-existent it must be explained that Mrs. Browning wrote a poem of this name."²⁵ When read in the context of a note to her own "biography," Woolf's comment might be taken as a welcome sign that biography has triumphed over poetry in the literary marketplace, however, in her essay in *The Second Common Reader* Woolf's earnest concern over a

lack of a reading audience for Barrett Browning's poetic text motivates her attempt to re-value and re-canonize *Aurora Leigh*. Woolf begins "Aurora Leigh" by commenting on the triumph of biographical (readerly and consumer) interests over poetic ones:

By one of those ironies of fashion that might have amused the Brownings themselves, it seems likely that they are now far better known in the flesh than they have ever been in the spirit. Passionate lovers, in curls and side whiskers, oppressed, defiant, eloping—in this guise thousands of people must know and love the Brownings who have never read a line of their poetry. They have become two of the most conspicuous figures in that bright and animated company of authors who, thanks to our modern habit of writing memoirs and printing letters and sitting to be photographed, live in the flesh, not merely as of old in the word; are known by their hats, not merely by their poems. What damage the art of photography has inflicted upon the art of literature has yet to be reckoned. How far are we going to read a poet when we can read about a poet is a problem to lay before biographers.²⁶

Here Woolf's anxieties about the triumph of biography over poetry seem to cast biography as a photographic art, as an art-form which functions to embody poets in a way similar to preserving their hats. By cautioning her readers about the "damage" that photography has "inflicted" upon literature, Woolf suggests that the practice of embodying authors—through photographs and memoirs—is unfortunate and that the modern preferences of readers for their authors to live in the "flesh" rather than in "the word" is something to be mourned and even counteracted if possible. However, Woolf acknowledges the genuine readerly pleasure of biography when she asks why one would read a poem when one really cares about the life of the poet; by placing herself within the pronoun "we" as one of the mass of common readers who prefer reading about a poet to reading that poet, Woolf admits to sharing an interest in the fleshy embodiments of past authors. In this passage, Woolf sets up a competitive relationship between these representational genres and figures poetry as losing out to the more salable, popular and

commercial media of biography, of romantic legend, of photography, of hats (literary tourism, homes and haunts, etc.).²⁷

As her essay continues, Woolf goes on to lament the growing absence of Barrett Browning's poetry from the canon ("the primers dismiss her with contumely"²⁸) and from the popular attention of readers and seemingly sets up her essay as an argument and as an advertisement for reading *Aurora Leigh*. In the context of the *Second Common Reader*, a text that through its literary critical stance and through its call to readers argues for its own privileged canon of texts, the essay attempts to return the novel-poem to its rightful place of high-value and of high appreciation. At the outset of the essay, Woolf sets up a generic battle between biography and poetry in which Barrett Browning's poetry is in danger of extinction and places herself (as critic and stand-in reader) in the position of a critical authority reviving the literary merit of the poetic over and above the popular, marketable value of the biographic.

Surprisingly for one supposedly arguing for the medium of verse, Woolf spends a lot of space paraphrasing the events of the novel-poem and focuses a lot of space explaining her enjoyment as a reader of those events. Of course, in a critical essay addressed to potential readers of the text some paraphrasing would be expected, however Woolf's "hasty abstract" of the first volume of *Aurora Leigh* seems exuberant in its magpie-like excerpting and in its echoing of Barrett-Browning's turns of phrase. Here, as she does in *Flush*, Woolf rewrites Browning's poetry—crystallizing and preserving her favorite phrases and adding her own language, tone, and humor in her retelling.²⁹ In this essay, Woolf admits that her re-visionary supplementation of Barrett Browning's text cannot match the original: "this hasty abstract of the first volume of *Aurora Leigh* does it

of course no sort of justice; but having gulped down the original much as Aurora herself advises, soul-forward, headlong, we find ourselves in a state where some attempt at the ordering of our multitudinous impressions becomes imperative.”³⁰ Woolf’s comment suggests that she can do no justice to the *form* of Barrett Browning’s poem, but rather that she can try to re-organize the poem’s content and her “impressions” into an “ordered” account of her readerly responses.

Woolf’s call for the “ordering” of her readerly impressions leads her to criticize Barrett Browning for allowing her biography to intrude upon her art. On the same grounds for which Woolf faults Charlotte Brontë in *A Room of One’s Own*, she criticizes Barrett Browning for allowing her “writer’s presence” to intrude too strongly into her text: “Through the voice of Aurora the character, the circumstances, idiosyncrasies of Elizabeth Barrett Browning ring in our ears. Mrs. Browning could no more conceal herself than she could control herself [...] Again and again in the pages we have read, Aurora the fictitious seems to be throwing light upon Elizabeth the actual.”³¹ As in *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf’s critique of her literary fore-mothers for allowing their lives to pollute their writing and for not being fully able to control their medium raises complicated questions about gender-politics and literary value. Why must the personal also be the uncontrolled or lesser form? If the personal/autobiographical piques readerly interest, then Woolf seems here to understand popularity as antithetical to artistic purity and superior literary value. Yet Woolf’s potentially snobbish attitude is complicated by her complicity as a biography-hunting reader. In light of her opening remarks on the popular interest in the “flesh” of the Brownings, Woolf’s persistent reading of the “actual” into the “fictitious” reproduces the readerly interest in life over art that she sets

out to remedy, at least partially, with her essay in praise of the poem. Woolf—a reader already tingling with biographical interest (and knowledge)—seems to condemn “Aurora Leigh” precisely for sating those “fleshy” desires. In this essay, Woolf criticizes female authors of the past—embodied in the figure of the poetess, Barrett Browning—for not being able to maintain a fierce separation of the aesthetic work and the author’s personality, a separation which readerly desires are constantly trying to bridge and undo. In other words, it seems that Woolf is really faulting Browning for not being able to control and overcome the fleshy desires of her readers (including Woolf herself).

In her attempt to re-evaluate Barrett Browning’s text, Woolf cannot prevent her biographical interests from overshadowing her discussion of the poem itself. Indeed, even as Woolf begins her essay by acknowledging the generic struggle between biographies and poems and by seeming to side against photography-like biographical representation in favor of poetic expression, in “Aurora Leigh” and in *Flush*, Woolf continually stages the battle between biographical prose and poetry. Notably, poetry most often loses the fight. However, in spite of the common overshadowing of the poetic medium, Woolf continues to argue for its value as a genre that could have an important role in representing modernity and which offers unique expressive advantages.

While *Aurora Leigh* “the novel-poem” is not “the masterpiece it might have been” due to the encroachment of Barrett Browning’s life and the limitations of her circumstances (mainly her confinement in the sickroom), Woolf still finds it “monstrous and exquisite all by turns, it overwhelms and bewilders; but, nevertheless, it still commands our interest and our respect.”³² As Woolf articulates her high esteem for the text she focuses on the poem’s attempt to “present [its] own age” and also on the

aesthetic struggle to find a form adequate to the modern age: “But what form, [Barrett Browning] asks, can a poem on modern life take? The drama is impossible, for only servile and docile plays have any chance of success. Moreover what we (in 1846) have to say about life is not fit for ‘boards, actors, prompters, gas-light, and costume; our stage is now the soul itself.’”³³ Here Woolf seems to agree with Barrett Browning’s contention that drama—“the old form in which poetry had dealt with life”—“was obsolete,” inadequate to and inappropriate for modern experience.³⁴ Woolf’s description of the prompters, gaslight, and costumes make the stage seem too much about outward performance, false showiness, and tricking the eye, and not enough about representing the real, the internal, “the soul.” As in the frontispiece image for the Hogarth *Flush*, temporalities are blended and overlaid in this passage as “modern life” and “we (in 1846)” suggest both Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s struggles with her own age and her poem’s struggles for its afterlife during the time of Woolf’s essay. Part of the temporal confusion of the passage seems to come from Woolf’s technique of parroting Barrett Browning’s voice through a blend of direct quotes and free indirect discourse—as Woolf’s formal technique blends the voice of the contemporaneous (in 1932) critic and the voice of the nineteenth-century poetess. Woolf’s contemporaneous essay *A Letter to A Young Poet* (1932) insists that Barrett Browning’s problem of finding a form to represent “modern life” persists in 1932. Woolf’s shifty authorial stance as a reader who can inhabit both 1846 and 1932 allows her to conflate authorial and readerly struggles with form and expectations from both periods and to evaluate the relative merits of different genres for both eras.

While plays are figured as panderers to the public tastes and as incapable of dealing with modern life, novels, on the contrary, are already succeeding at the representative challenge of presenting their own age according to Woolf: “The novelists were dealing triumphantly with modern life in prose.”³⁵ At this point in “Aurora Leigh,” Woolf extends her analysis beyond the confines of Barrett Browning to survey the broader cultural field of writers in different genres in 1846, “the desire to deal with modern life in poetry was not confined to Miss Barrett,” and to place Barrett Browning’s expressive desires in the broader context in which they were “natural enough.”³⁶ In her description of Barrett Browning’s authorial dilemma, Woolf describes the poet as echoing her character Aurora Leigh, in feeling that “modern life ha[s] an intensity and a meaning of its own” and in asking “why should these spoils fall solely into the laps of the prose writers?”³⁷ Here again Woolf cannot resist collapsing author and character, making the tone of her essay difficult to fix—at once she takes on the authoritative stance of the historicizing critic dispassionately outlining the literary marketplace in the mid-Victorian era and at the same time she continually slips into the impassioned voice of Aurora Leigh making pleas for expanding the province of poetry.³⁸ As critic-reader, Woolf thematizes her readerly struggles to maintain critical distance from the past she’s analyzing through her shifting tone and stance.

Woolf presents Barrett Browning as throwing “down her challenge to the Brontes and the Thackerays in nine books of blank verse” and echoes through paraphrasing Barrett Browning’s description of her novel-poem’s intention, as “running into the midst of our conventions, and rushing into drawing-rooms [...] and so, meeting face to face and without mask the Humanity of the age, and speaking the truth of it out plainly.”³⁹ Here,

Barrett Browning's desire to rival the novelists is framed as valiant and earnest, bred out of an appreciation of the value and possibility presented in modern life and out of Barrett Browning's rejection of the kind of "remoteness [embodied by] the toga and the picturesque."⁴⁰ Yet despite the dramatic and triumphant tone through which the essay figures Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* as an impassioned challenge, Woolf immediately thereafter questions the capability of the poets to represent modern life: "But can they? Let us see what happens to a poet when he poaches upon a novelist's preserves and gives us not an epic or a lyric but the story of many lives that move and change and are inspired by the interests and passions that are ours in the middle of the reign of Queen Victoria."⁴¹ Woolf again shifts in her tone from the voice of a contemporary ally of Barrett Browning's (i.e. part of the "we in 1846" struggling to find a suitable form) to the appraising, distanced stance of the critic evaluating the success of Barrett Browning's generic innovation. After raising this challenging question, Woolf spends the rest of her essay appraising the difficulties and pay-offs for writing modern life in different genres and presents the challenges and benefits almost objectively like a profit and loss sheet.

Woolf begins her accounting by cataloguing the challenges facing the poet who attempts to grapple with modern life and with a "story" as opposed to an epic or a lyric: "a tale has to be told; the poet must somehow convey to us the necessary information that his hero has been asked out to dinner."⁴² The phrase "necessary information" suggests that, for Woolf, one of the expressive functions that any genre attempting to tell a "story" about "modern life" involves communicating key pieces of information about plot progression. In other words, Woolf suggests that modern life itself requires a genre which can incorporate (un-jarringly) the details of every day life. She then demonstrates

that a prose writer can slip these details in “harmlessly”; she offers an elegant single prose sentence expressing the idea “as quietly and prosaically as possible.”⁴³ For Woolf, a successful “modern” genre must express the mundane information “necessary” to communicating the fabric of modern life “quietly” and without drawing too much attention to the act. While the prose writer (voiced by Woolf’s sentence) can accomplish this with ease, Woolf’s mock-poet struggles to express the same idea in a rhymed quatrain. Woolf describes the poetic version as “absurd” and laments that “the simple words have been made to strut and posture and take on an emphasis which makes them ridiculous.”⁴⁴ According to Woolf, poetry fails to communicate small details of plot (and also of modern experience) without aggrandizing them, exaggerating them to the point of ridiculousness, as she insists in her mock quatrain by ending with an exclamation point, “And would I dine with them next day!”⁴⁵ For Woolf, poets cannot adequately—or at least not as subtly as novelists—represent the details of plot needed to construct the day-to-day happenings of modern life.

The second challenge facing would-be poet-realists, according to Woolf, is incorporating the dialogue which has “superseded the sword” as the center of the stories of modern life: “It is in talk that the high moments of life, the shock of character upon character, are defined.”⁴⁶ Woolf claims that “blank verse has proved itself the most remorseless enemy of living speech” and argues that because “talk tossed up on the surge and swing of the verse becomes high, rhetorical, impassioned [...] the reader’s mind stiffens and glazes under the monotony of the rhythm.”⁴⁷ While in the struggling quatrain, Woolf sees the failure as a matter of emphasis—the simple plot detail becomes an exclamation—here Woolf claims the form of blank verse to be unsuitable for

expressing “talk.” Here it is not emphasis, but rather the generic rhythm of blank verse which proves incommensurate with modernity: “Poetry when it tries to follow the words on people’s lips is terribly impeded.”⁴⁸ The rhythm of verse cannot accommodate the idiosyncrasies of character’s voices for Woolf and she quotes Barrett Browning’s novel-poem as an example of the flight to “generalization and declamation” urged by poetry’s inherent flow: “Forced by the nature of her medium, she ignores the slighter, the subtler, the more hidden shades of emotion by which a novelist builds up touch by touch a character in prose.”⁴⁹ Here Woolf figures the poet as being controlled by the genre and as having very little margin for expanding the bounds of the medium. Strangely, in these comments upon the inevitable monotony of verse, Woolf does not seem to question habits of reading verse which might render it “high, rhetorical, impassioned” to readers expecting certain generic qualities which might be changed or adapted through experimentation like Barrett Browning’s; for example, *Aurora Leigh*’s non-rhyming blank verse does at least limit the elevating rhythmical effect in contrast to Woolf’s invented exclamatory rhymed quatrain.

When discussing the shortcomings of poetry as an expressive medium for modern life, Woolf seems to deny both author and reader the power to change the expectations and effects clustered around the genres of verse. However, in concluding her essay, Woolf concedes that when comparing the novel and the novel-poem side-by-side the latter triumphs in its ability to condense and compress (“[Barrett Browning’s] page is packed twice as full as [the novelist’s]”⁵⁰), to make briefly sketched characters symbolic, and to render the “general aspect of things-market, sunset, church” with “a brilliance and a continuity, owing to the compressions and elisions of poetry, which mock the prose

writer and his slow accumulations of careful detail.”⁵¹ The advantages of poetry over prose here lead Woolf to conclude her essay by lamenting the lack of any successors to Barrett Browning’s hybrid genre; although the poet struggled with dialogue and simple plot details, Woolf suggests that her experiment was valuable and was able to express modern life in a form with distinct advantages. Woolf spends a great portion of her essay weighing the advantages and disadvantages of writing in different genres (biography vs. poetry, poetry vs. novels). Her comparative approach—carefully weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each generic trial—and her final lament over the discontinuation of the novel-poem suggests that Woolf values competition among the genres and enjoys having a large variety of representational strategies too choose from (each with its own slant). Woolf’s formal techniques within the essay—her shifts from speaking through Barrett Browning (“we in 1846”) and as contemporary reader/critic—suggest that her preoccupying questions about generic value are connected with thinking through her connections to the past and to the present moment. By beginning her essay with concerns over the relative market-value and salability of biography and poetry and ending by mourning the extinction of the novel-poem, Woolf implicitly argues for the importance of generic competition and for the distinct vantage-points onto the past that different genres can offer.

Nosing out a New Form: Woolf’s Play with Genres in *Flush*

In the early 1930s, Woolf’s writing was continually preoccupied with the possible functions of different genres—most notably poetry, fiction, and biography—for expressing her contemporary moment and for succeeding in the modern literary market.

In addition to “Aurora Leigh,” Woolf also publishes *A Letter to a Young Poet* (1932) a letter addressed to John Lehmann (aspiring poet and Hogarth Press manager) in which she claims to respond to a letter from Lehmann in which he asked: “Do write and tell me where poetry’s going, or if it’s dead?”⁵² Woolf writes back a lengthy and complicated response discussing the struggles of poets, the demands of readers, and her advice for how to keep poetry alive and usable in the modern day, to express modern rhythms and to capture figures like “Mrs. Gape” the charwoman or “Miss Curtis and her confidences on the omnibus.”⁵³ In *Flush*, Woolf puts her extensive thinking about genres and about their relative values for modern expression—evident in *A Letter to a Young Poet* and in “Aurora Leigh”—into practice by juxtaposing multiple verbal and visual genres in her text.

In her “biography,” Woolf defines genres against one another and articulates the need for a multiplicity of genres to allow different gazes onto the past and the present. In an early passage describing *Flush*’s birth and appearance, Woolf quotes snippets of Barrett Browning’s lengthy poem “To *Flush*, My Dog” even as she devalues poetry as an “unworthy medium,” a literary genre constrained by meter and unable to represent facts accurately:

All researches have failed to fix with any certainty the exact year of *Flush*’s birth, let alone the month or the day; but it is likely that he was born some time early in the year 1842. It is also probable that he was directly descended from Tray (c. 1816), whose points, preserved unfortunately only in the untrustworthy medium of poetry, prove him to have been a red cocker spaniel of merit [...] It is to poetry, alas, that we have to trust for our most detailed description of *Flush* himself as a young dog. He was of that particular shade of dark brown which in sunshine flashes ‘all over into gold.’ His eyes were ‘startled eyes of hazel bland.’ His ears were ‘tasseled’; his ‘slender feet’ were ‘canopied in fringes’ and his tail broad. Making allowance for the exigencies of rhyme and the inaccuracies of poetic diction, there is nothing here but what would meet with the approval of the Spaniel Club.⁵⁴

Here Woolf's narrator-biographer takes Barrett Browning's phrases out of their poetic context—a long rhyming paean to the dog—and uses them to attempt to “fix” Flush within her own system of value, fact, and breeding as marked by the conventions of biography and of the Spaniel Club. Woolf's method here positions the genres of poetry and biography in a conflicted rivalry in which Woolf defines the terms and undermines the status of poetry as able to represent the life of Flush. The mock-serious tone of the narrator-biographer here, whose “researches” have failed her, pokes fun both at the elevated language of the poem and also at her own biographic project enmeshed in the silly elitist criteria of the Spaniel Club and the dictates of pin-pointing dates and qualities. Here Woolf not only uses her biographer's interest in cold hard facts to mock the lofty and vague poetic language, but also uses poetry to illuminate the humor inherent in her mock-biographic project (i.e. her pretense of offering a historically accurate account of a canine subject to exaggerate the conventions of traditional biography).

In contrast to the narrator-biographer's claim that these lines certify Flush's pure-bred appearance, Barrett Browning's poem addresses Flush himself, and places these lines about his rather unexceptional physical appearance in the context of the poet's praise of his extraordinary personality. Barrett Browning contrasts Flush's ordinary exterior with his extraordinary personality, focusing especially on his sacrifice of normal spaniel past-times like running outside and chasing hares in order to stay by her bedside. After describing his tasseled ears and fringed feet, Barrett Browning highlights Flush's interior worth, his emotional sensitivity, and his choices:

Yet, my pretty, sportive friend,
Little is't to such an end
That I praise thy rareness!

Other dogs may be thy peers
Haply in these drooping ears
And this glossy fairness.

But of thee it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
Day and night unwearied, --
Watched within a curtained room
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom
Round the sick and dreary.
[...]
This dog only, waited on,
Knowing that when light is gone
Love remains for shining.⁵⁵

Barrett Browning's verse moves from the somewhat playful physical description of Flush that Woolf excerpts toward an extended comparison of Flush's active devotion and sacrifice in comparison to lesser "other dogs." Barrett Browning's poem ends with a "benediction" for Flush and lists all of the blessings that she wishes to provide for Flush—including but not limited to endless pats, sugared milk, a purple cup to drink from, protection from pesky cologne odors, and daily macaroons. While at times Barrett Browning's poem takes on a playful tone—especially in the opening description's of Flush's body and in the final list of benedictions—the poem's tone becomes more earnest and serious in its praise of Flush's devoted "watching" in contrast to the behavior of those "other dogs." Similarly, although she takes Barrett Browning's verse out of context in her description of Flush's appearance and derides the silliness and inaccuracies of rhyme and meter, elsewhere in her biography Woolf draws from the more serious subject of the poem, the pathos of a puppy confined to a sick-room. In this early passage Woolf re-places snatches of Barrett Browning's "To Flush, My Dog" into a different value system in order to classify Flush as a biographical subject and as a well bred Spaniel. Alternatively, at other moments in the text she uses the poem as a source of emblematic

facts about Flush: the purple drinking cup comes to symbolize Flush's class privilege and his dislike of the odor of cologne comes to represent his somewhat foppish, sensitive sensibilities. In *Flush*, Woolf draws on poetry both as a source of "necessary information" and as a foil for her biographic project.

In "The Back Bedroom" chapter, Woolf again invokes one of Barrett Browning's poetic treatments of Flush and even more directly attempts to re-write a poem in narrative form. Woolf follows Barrett Browning's lead in comparing Flush to "Pan," recasting Barrett Browning's poem entitled "Flush, or Faunus." She uses the poem as an occasion for a biographical event; the narrator-biographer introduces her retelling of the poem by prefacing the moment with Miss Barrett's questions about the value of words:

After all, she may have thought, do words say everything? Can words say anything? Do not words destroy the symbol that lies beyond the reach of words? Once at least Miss Barrett seems to have found it so. She was lying [sic], thinking; she had forgotten Flush altogether, and her thoughts were so sad that the tears fell upon pillow. Then suddenly a hairy head was pressed against her; large bright eyes shone in hers; and she started. Was it Flush, or was it Pan? Was she no longer an invalid in Wimpole Street, but a Greek nymph in some dim grove in Arcady? And did the bearded god himself press his lips to hers? For a moment she was transformed; she was a nymph and Flush was Pan. The sun burnt and love blazed. But suppose Flush had been able to speak—would he not have said something sensible about potato disease in Ireland? [...] And yet, had he been able to write as she did?—The question is superfluous happily, for truth compels us to say that in the year 1842-43 Miss Barrett was not a nymph but an invalid; Flush was not a poet but a red cocker spaniel; and Wimpole Street was not Arcady but Wimpole Street.⁵⁶

The narrator-biographer's tone here shifts from the uncertainty of abstract conjectures about what Miss Barrett "may have thought" about words to the reassuring concreteness of the past tense. The re-written poem here then takes on the status of biographical fact—the "once at least" moment with which Woolf anchors her theories about Barrett Browning's relationship to words and to Flush. Strangely then, in this context, the re-

written poem becomes a factual source to solidify the moment articulated in the poem as an historical event in time. While the narrator-biographer is again forced to rely on the “untrustworthy medium of poetry,” in this instance, the poem allows for more biographical authority signaled by the use of the past tense. The narrator-biographer has taken the poem’s pretence—that it is based on an actual event—as fact. Barrett Browning’s “Flush, or Faunus” begins by invoking two separate temporalities: “You see this dog. It was but yesterday / I mused forgetful of his presence here.”⁵⁷ Rather than pointing to one concrete moment in time (as in Woolf’s definite “once”), Barrett Browning’s poem invokes two moments: the moment of the telling of the poem (the present tense in which the “you” sees the dog) and the moment “yesterday” when the poet mused and the encounter with “Faunus” occurred. The shiftiness of time in Browning’s poem evokes an intimacy between the poet and the addressee/reader, the “You” who can “see” the dog in the present and imagine the dog in the past occupying the same space, the “here” that poet, dog, and addressee/reader seem to be sharing during the telling of the poem. In *Flush*’s re-casting of the poem, the intimacy of the address becomes distanced and the narrator-biographer’s stands between the poet-as-character and the reader.

When narrating the “events” of the poem, Woolf emphasizes the narrative qualities of her prose by phrasing Barrett Browning’s vision in terms of questions and by juxtaposing the interior uncertainty of the character against the somewhat sardonic tone of the omniscient narrator-biographer. The questioning technique highlights the interior uncertainty of the poet even at the time of vision and the repeated “or” leaves both possibilities on offer (invalid *or* nymph, etc). In other words, the invalid never fully

disappears from view and the nymph is always also an invalid imagining nymph-hood. In Woolf's version, the poet's moment of revelation is already ironically distanced through the intervention of the omniscient narrator-biographer. The reader never gets transported along with the character—we always know that Faunus is Flush, that Barrett Browning an invalid, and that Wimpole Street is not Arcady.

In her poetic version of the encounter, Barrett Browning uses similes to create the illusion that Flush does indeed become the “goatly god” of Faunus. While she also emerges from the vision back to reality, the poet extracts a universal message about love from the encounter: “I knew Flush and rose above / Surprise and sadness, - thanking the true Pan / Who, by low creatures, leads to heights of love.”⁵⁸ Woolf on the other hand seems to want partly to satirize the mythologizing instinct of the poet and to reassert the cold hard facts of the case—she replaces Barrett Browning's “general” and “poetic” with a comically hyperbolic version of “representation reality accuracy.” Woolf argues that an accurate representation of Flush would show him *not* as a symbol of mythical love, but as a pragmatic thinker who might have said something sensible about the potato famine; in this way, she claims Flush's personality for *her* order of narrative and biographic realism—she casts Flush as being eminently practical like the biographer-narrator who reminds us of the years, the illness, the spaniel-ness, and the Wimpole street context as opposed to the poetically sentimental and mythically symbolic figure in Barrett Browning's poem. In this re-writing of Barrett Browning's poem, Woolf uses her poetic allusion to play with the conventions of biography—both by destabilizing any firm sense of what counts as a biographic fact or event and by hyperbolizing her biographer-narrator's pragmatic drive through its contrast with the poet's uncertain probing of

symbols. Here Woolf's technique at once devalues the poetic as a silly and ungrounded genre (when compared with the cold hard facts of an interest in the potato famine) *and* takes the poem as a foundational fact thus simultaneously undercutting any claims to solidity that could be made for her own medium of biography. By placing the genres of poetry and biography in such complicated and mutually destabilizing competition, Woolf raises questions about the different forms of access to the past that these genres allow.

***Flush's* Popularity and Book Design: Attracting Readers and Playing with Visual Genres**

During its composition, Woolf described *Flush* in multiple ways at different times: as a different kind of writing to take her mind away from the stress of *The Waves*; as a possible financial off-setting of the anticipated low sales from *The Waves*; as a joke; as a strain; and as an entertainment. As Christine Reynier has noted, although *Flush* was “begun ‘to let [Woolf’s] brain cool’ with some ‘easy indolent writing’ (*Diary*, 2 September 1931) while she was reading the proofs of *The Waves*, *Flush* nevertheless required as much care and rewriting as her other books (see *Diary*, 5 January 1933).”⁵⁹ Woolf’s emotions about and motivations for writing *Flush* continually changed over the course of its production and her feelings toward its success (both commercial and aesthetic) also shifted. Woolf anticipated the success of the book and dreaded it, writing in her diary three days before its Hogarth publication: “*Flush* will be out on Thursday & I shall be very much depressed, I think, by the kind of praise. They’ll say its ‘charming’ delicate, ladylike. And it will be popular [...] I must not let myself believe that I’m simply a ladylike prattler: for one thing its not true. But they’ll all say so. And I shall

very much dislike the popular success of *Flush*.”⁶⁰ In this passage, Woolf articulates her worries about the critical reception of *Flush* as fears of being derided and dismissed through faint praise tainted with gender-politics: “ladylike” here becomes synonymous with prattler and is described as almost a necessary consequence of popularity. Woolf fears being easily classed with the hordes of scribbling “popular” charming writers because of her gender and because of the style and subject of *Flush*—the playfulness, the dogginess, and for the decision to focus on Elizabeth Barrett Browning (not as a poet, but as a poetess—a popular figure of romantic legend, of the popular stage, etc). Indeed, Woolf’s fears were not unwarranted and the two most negative reviews did dismiss the text precisely for its tone, for its silly subject matter, and even more so for its suspect popularity.⁶¹

While Woolf did anticipate the dismissive response of these critics, she did also genuinely value more appreciative readings of her text and attributes the reaction of her detractors to their own misreading of her intentions. In a letter to Sibyl Colefax on 22 October 1933, Woolf expresses her appreciation of Colefax’s praise of the book and suggests that many less subtle readers missed her point: “I’m so glad you liked *Flush*. I think it shows great discrimination in you because it was all a matter of hints and shades, and practically no one has seen what I was after, and I was elated to heaven to think that you among the faithful firmly stood—or whatever Milton said.”⁶² In this letter, Woolf turns to poetry for a resource to articulate her emotions—but here she makes the poetic allusion comical and only partial by not directly quoting the line and undercutting the lofty allusion with her “whatever.” In this letter, Woolf describes her biographic practice as difficult to discern and she articulates her method as a complex and subtle art through

a visual metaphor of “hints and shades”—she seems to imply that only a skilled literary consumer can “[see] what [she] was after.” Here, Woolf conceptualizes the whole project of *Flush* as a matter of “hints and shades” and as demanding a discriminating viewer, a viewer who might pick up on the layering of multiple times and meanings in the volume’s frontispiece, in the juxtaposed literary genres, and in the multiple competing visual accompaniments to the text.

Although at times, Woolf viewed *Flush*’s popularity as problematic and dangerous, at other moments she reveled in the financial advantages of the book, which might offset the costs of her less salable fiction (particularly the initially bleak sales of *The Waves*), and which could be better achieved through marketing the text as inclusive of visual images.⁶³ In her letters and diaries, Woolf repeatedly refers to the potential marketing benefits of illustrated books and of dust jackets in her letters. As Diane Gillespie notes, when Woolf asked Vanessa for a woodcut for the cover of *Kew Gardens*, she described it as: “a design that again need not have ‘reference to the story’ and that could be used, with a change of title, for subsequent publications. Such a design would be a ‘tremendous draw,’ Woolf said (L II 298).”⁶⁴ Woolf’s acknowledgement of the “draw” of visual images for readers and her use of Bell’s artwork particularly to market Hogarth Press books converge in the visual presentation of the Hogarth edition of *Flush*.

The early versions of *Flush* printed in book form offer a palimpsestic visual portrait of Flush on the dust-jackets to early editions and in the book’s frontispiece. The 1933 Hogarth first edition of the book was enrobed by a cream dust-jacket printed in brown with a photographic image of a spaniel perched atop a cushioned stool gazing to the right margin of the cover (See Figure 4.5).

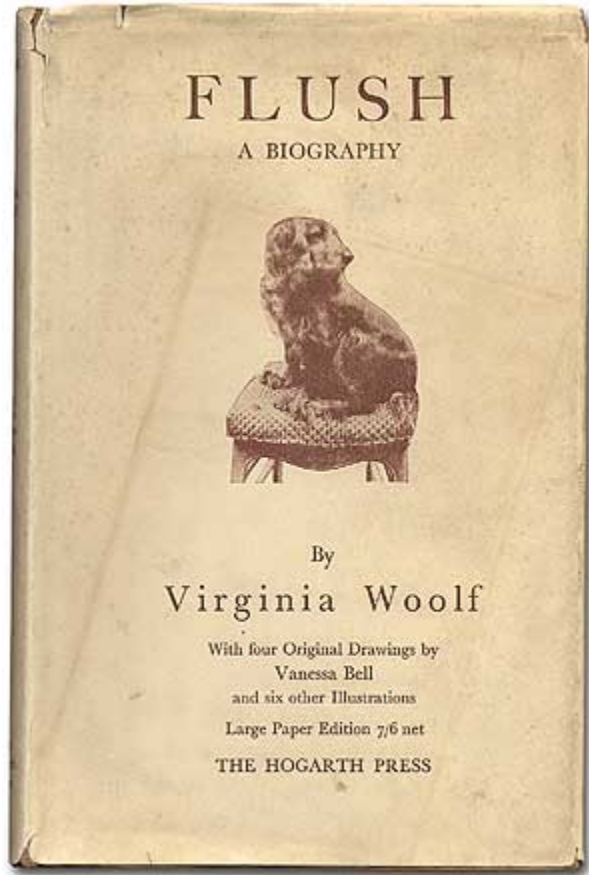


Figure 4.5: Hogarth Dust Jacket for *Flush*

The jacket image appears awkwardly cut out and then pasted on top of the cover – in other words, the spaniel looks as if he has been torn from his original context and re-positioned on the foreign and otherwise empty terrain of the cream cover. The composition of this cover and its suggestion of the somewhat violent transplantation and re-contextualization of *Flush* echo Woolf's method of pulling out snatches from Barrett Browning's poetry and reworking those fragments into a narrative account of her own. The bibliographic code of the Hogarth dust-jacket visually echoes Woolf's literary method of taking Barrett Browning's words out of context and making them serve a new function. Interestingly, the Hogarth Press Manager specifically mentions the erasure of the background of the image in a letter to the printers of the cover art: the letter requests

cost information for “making a block” from the enclosed photograph by keeping the “exact size of photograph, omitting background altogether, and retaining dog and chair [...] Please note to cut out background from back of chair and below seat.”⁶⁵ The clipped dog on the cover has been ripped from context and put into the service of marketing the text through its new location on the cover of the book. Here, the dog is used to advertise the visual appeal of the volume’s bibliographic code. Under the dog’s image, the dust-jacket prominently advertises that the book includes “four Original Drawings / by Vanessa Bell / and six other illustrations” playing up the text’s incorporation of visual media as a “draw” for potential readers/consumers.⁶⁶

In the Hogarth volume, the frontispiece faces the title page, which includes the Hogarth Press colophon of the wolf’s head. The wolf’s head faces to the left, as it apparently gazes across the spine of the book toward the frontispiece portrait of Flush. Designed by Vanessa Bell, the wolf’s head in conjunction with the juxtaposition of the two dog images suggests a competition between representational media: here the photograph competes with Bell’s stylized drawing and announces the multiple media which will be placed into a competitive relationship in Woolf’s book. The dynamic contrast between the colophon and the frontispiece subject particularly foregrounds the competing versions of Flush that will be drawn versus photographed versus narrated in the course of the volume. The Hogarth Press increased the amount of illustrations (from an initial plan using Bell’s four illustrations as end papers, the frontispiece, and three other portraits (of the two “Mrs. Browning”’s and of Mary Russell Mitford)) to suit the demands of the Book Society which desired a fancier edition that could demand the steeper price required for their “choices.”⁶⁷

The multiplicity of Flushes offered to the reader by the photographic frontispiece and the dust-jacket and the colophon is further enhanced by Vanessa Bell's illustrations which appear as facing page illustrations in the Hogarth edition.⁶⁸ These images present Flush to the reader through the medium of reproduced pen and ink line drawings. In contrast to photography, the medium of pen and ink drawing does not claim an auratic or historical connection to its object; a playful supplement to Woolf's textual descriptions, these drawings make no biographical claims toward "representation reality accuracy." Indeed, Bell's illustrations offer a more "general poetic" sense of the four moments she chose to highlight. While most critics have neglected to discuss Vanessa Bell's collaboration with her sister in terms of illustrating numerous dust-jackets and several texts,⁶⁹ Diane Gillespie has written extensively about the sisterly collaboration and she asserts that Vanessa Bell's attitudes toward illustration echo Roger Fry's view in his 1927 essay "Book Illustration and a Modern Example":

[...] real illustration in the sense of reinforcing the author's verbal expression by an identical graphic expression is quite impossible. But it may be possible to embroider the author's ideas or rather to execute variations on the author's theme which will not pretend to be one with the text, but rather, as it were, a running commentary, like marginal notes written by a reader. ... And of all such marginal commentators the draughtsman is the most discreet, for he is inaudible, he never puts an actual word into your head which might get confused with the words of the author. He merely starts a vague train of thought by the image which he puts before you in one of those pauses which the author's discursiveness allows.⁷⁰

This theory of illustration—likening the illustrator to the an annotating reader—raises interesting questions about how visual media incorporated into book design might have been seen and read by contemporary readers. Fry's notion of illustration happening both in the margins and during a "pause" seems to correlate with the facing-page insert formatting of the illustrations to *Flush*. These images offer the reader a moment to pause

in their reading and in their juxtaposition with the text (across the center margin) they function spatially in a similar way (i.e. via adjacency) to marginalia.

Vanessa Bell's illustrations of scenes from the text function differently—generating very different “train[s] of thought”—than the more formalized portraits of different figures and characters (i.e. the drawings and portraits of Miss Mitford, Miss Barrett, Robert Browning, and Barrett Browning). Bell's portraits with their sketchy lines and unusual compositions involve the reader/viewer's eye in a series of movements around the page that the more static images (including the 19th century-stylized drawing of “Flush's birthplace” and the portraits of the eminent Victorians who knew Flush) do not offer. These other images seem to function more as standard biographical images—visuals that suggest a historical subject frozen in time (posed as the sitter for a formal portrait, static, gazing back at the viewer). Yet even in these more expected biographic images, Woolf adds a layer of intrigue by including two portraits of Barrett Browning, both captioned “Mrs. Browning,” doubling the potential versions of and looks-back from the poetess offered by the book's bibliographic code. The first image—a charcoal portrait which suggests a certain disembodiment through its faintly sketched lower half (see Figure 4.6)—occurs at a moment when the text is entirely preoccupied with Flush (his acclimation to Wimpole Street values and doggy hierarchies) and is hardly focused on Barrett Browning at all. The second image—a much darker painted portrait which portrays the poet on a throne-like chair (see Figure 4.7)—appears at a moment in the text when Flush has been kidnapped and both dog and mistress are in anguish over their separation. Strangely, this second image, which seems to suggest Barrett Browning's power over the viewer, “illustrates” a textual moment in which the poet-character feels

helpless and distraught and hemmed in by the political views of her surrounding patriarchal figures (father, brothers, and Browning all stand against her desires to pay Flush's ransom).



Figure 4.6: “Mrs. Browning” Illustration in Hogarth Edition of *Flush*



Figure 4.7: Second “Mrs. Browning” Illustration in Hogarth Edition of *Flush*

Unlike the figures portrayed in the formal portraits, Bell’s subjects pointedly do *not* look back at the viewer. Diane Gillespie argues that Bell’s illustrations for *Flush* “reflect Virginia Woolf’s experiments with point of view; unlike the other illustrations, they are line drawings, more detailed although loose in style.”⁷¹ Gillespie reads the illustrations, “The Back Bedroom” and “At Casa Guidi” as a twinned pair that function almost as inversions of one another; for Gillespie “The Back Bedroom” reveals Miss Barrett on “her couch” from a low angle through a doorway and the image “communicate[s] enclosure[,]” while “At Casa Guidi” depicts the uncrowded space of

Barrett Browning's home in Italy and instead of "looking into an interior space" she now faces toward the "huge window in front of her."⁷² Gillespie asserts that these two images show the poetess "from the dog's point of view" and that they reflect the dramatic change in environment from Wimpole Street to Casa Guidi.



Figure 4.8: "The Back Bedroom" Vanessa Bell's Illustration for Hogarth *Flush*



Figure 4.9: “At Casa Guidi” Vanessa Bell’s Illustration for Hogarth *Flush*

While I agree with Gillespie's reading, I am also interested in the direction of Barrett Browning's gaze in both images toward or away from the viewer/reader and toward the presumed place of Flush himself in the image. While "The Back Bedroom" could be seen as an unwelcoming scene of enclosure from Barrett Browning's perspective (as Gillespie reads the image), the open door and the sense that the viewer (i.e. Flush) is being invited into the space and Barrett Browning's gaze somewhat in the direction of Flush suggest that the image also expresses Flush's sense of inclusion in the sanctum of his realm with Miss Barrett in Wimpole Street. Conversely, in "At Casa Guidi," Barrett Browning has turned her back on Flush; the sense of infinite space and freedom that Gillespie reads into the image alternately registers Woolf's descriptions of Flush's sense of alienation from his mistress once they move to Italy. In other words, I would argue that Bell not only reflects Woolf's perspective in terms of the point-of-view angles of the images, but also in terms of the emotional valences of the content of the two images.⁷³

In her drafted sketches for both "The Back Bedroom" and "At Casa Guidi," Vanessa Bell experimented with shifting the directions of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's gaze; she sketched versions of these images showing Barrett Browning facing completely away from the viewer, glancing out of a window partially facing the viewer, and gazing ahead while offering a profile view to the viewer. Bell's play with directing the gazes of both viewer and subject in these images suggests that for her, the interplay between the gazes of subject and of reader/viewer was somehow central to the meaning of the scenes she was illustrating (see Figures 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 for the different facing Brownings of the sketched versions).⁷⁴ Interestingly, in her sketch of "The Back Bedroom," Bell

incorporates the five busts (referred to in the text as belonging to eminent writers and poets) presumably gazing down on the recumbent poetess and also glaring out at the viewer to create a scene full of interpenetrating gazes in which Barrett Browning's gaze points away from the viewer and most likely does not include Flush either.



Figure 4.10: Vanessa Bell's sketch for "The Back Bedroom," Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room

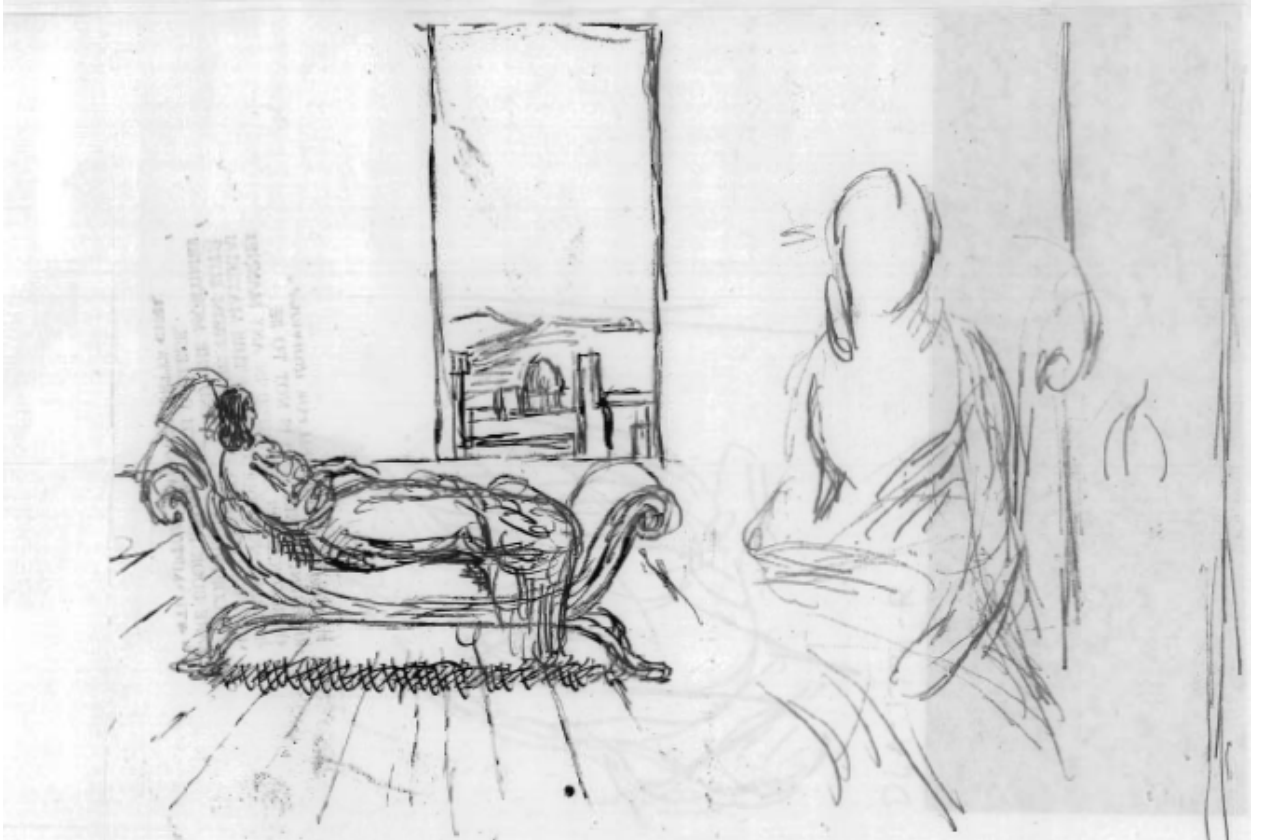


Figure 4.11: Vanessa Bell's sketch for "At Casa Guidi," Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room



Figure 4.12: Vanessa Bell's sketches for "At Casa Guidi," Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room

Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf, as well as the Hogarth Press as a publishing house, contribute their additional angles onto the life of *Flush* and offer up differing generic representations (both verbal and visual) which jostle with one another to make old forms serve new purposes. The book design of the Hogarth edition incorporates multiple competing visual media and different illustrative versions of the text's central figures. Woolf's play with visual media in the volume participates in her larger formal experimentation (both literary and extra-literary) with the form of biography and with different methods of accessing and representing the past. In the book's bibliographic code, Woolf places different visual forms in a dynamic tension with one another—all vying to represent the subjects of her text and to give the reader/viewer a vantage point onto the past. The Hogarth *Flush* incorporates a variety of images, some of which might

satisfy readerly expectations for a volume of biography (i.e. the inclusion of Flush's birthplace⁷⁵, the formal portraits of the eminent Victorian authors, etc) and some of which might confuse or complicate these generic expectations (Vanessa Bell's illustrations suggest more generalized scenes—rather than specific moments in time—and thus seem to belong more to a work of fiction than one of factual biography). Immensely popular and marketed through its salable genres—its biographic vantage point onto a famous figure from the past and its inclusion of the “draw” of visual accompaniments—*Flush* stretches the bounds of its generic categories. The generically hybrid text simultaneously affirms and destabilizes readerly expectations both in terms of the genre of biographic book design and in terms of the literary genre of biography.

Conclusion: “But he did not look at her”

In the earlier two examples of Woolf's use of Barrett Browning's verse, Woolf's text almost cannibalizes Barrett Browning's versions of Flush—taking fragments of poetry and re-casting them for her own narrative, humorous, biographical, and genre-defining purposes. However, despite her tendency to write over Barrett Browning's poetic Flush, at the end of her biography Woolf seems to cede some of her authority to her rival from the past and to the competing medium of verse. When narrating Flush's death, the omniscience of the narrator-biographer breaks down and she presents his final dream as a series of questions, of uncertain possibilities, and then quotes Barrett Browning's “Flush, Or Faunus” in its entirety immediately before the final paragraph of her text. Notably, the three key passages which engage with Barrett Browning's poems “Flush, or Faunus” and “To Flush, My Dog” only appear in later drafts of the text.⁷⁶

Perhaps the later addition of these allusive gestures speaks to the changing purpose of the book in Woolf's mind, to Flush's transition from being a diverting joke on Lytton, to being a more serious, "subtle" development of a new biographical form. The drafts suggest that Woolf initially responded to the portrait of Flush presented through Barrett Browning's letters (and catalogued meticulously in her reading notebooks) and then later decided to incorporate Barrett Browning's poetic versions of Flush as a foil to and key component of her own biographic method.

Woolf heavily revised the ending to *Flush: A Biography* and only added Barrett Browning's poem late in the drafting process.⁷⁷ Her revisions to the ending were mainly accretive—as she continued to add subsequent sections to her initial ending. The initial ending—which became the fourth and third to last paragraphs when revised into the Hogarth published version—echoes Lytton Strachey's imaginative account of Queen Victoria's final conscious moments as the narrator-biographer ponders over what a dreaming Flush is thinking and feeling.⁷⁸ Woolf's narrator-biographer wonders: "He slept as dogs sleep when they are dreaming. Now his legs twitched—was he dreaming that he hunted rabbits in Spain? [...] Then he lay still again. And now he yelped, quickly, softly, many times in succession. Perhaps he heard Dr. Mitford egging his greyhounds on the hunt at Reading. Then his tail wagged sheepishly. Did he hear old Miss Mitford cry, 'Bad dog! Bad dog! [...]'"⁷⁹ While Woolf's narrator-biographer appears confident in her vision of Flush's external movements, his twitching legs, tail wagging, etc., she loses her omniscient view into Flush's mind at the very end of a text in which she has up until this point confidently pronounced her access to Flush's fears, longings, and interior struggles. The shutting out of the narrator-biographer from Flush's

subjectivity adds to the strangeness of this moment as an ending to a biography—an ending where we can clearly see the body of Flush dreaming but have no access to his doggy thoughts. By ending her biography with this loss of biographic narrative omniscience, Woolf draws attention to the central difficulty of biography itself: the project of fleshing out the interior realm from mainly (and in Flush’s case *entirely*) external evidence.

Woolf’s note on the line “he was now dead” complicates the destabilization of biographic and narrative omniscience even further as it reveals the fictionality of the whole account of Flush’s dreaming: “It is certain that Flush died; but the date and manner of his death are unknown. The only reference consists in the statement that ‘Flush lived to a good old age and is buried in the vaults of Casa Guidi.’ Mrs Browning was buried in the English Cemetery at Florence, Robert Browning in Westminster Abbey. Flush still lies, therefore, beneath the house in which, once upon a time, the Brownings lived.”⁸⁰ In the earliest drafted version of the ending, Woolf included a small paragraph similar to the ending of this note, with its gesture at placing each of the subjects in their graves, as the final paragraph—separated by a dividing dash from the narrator-biographer’s puzzling account of Flush’s dream.⁸¹ Importantly, in this note, Woolf uses the conventions of the biographic apparatus—to give sources for the facts presented in the text—to undermine the biographic factuality of her own narrative and to illustrate her own artistic license in her new form of biographic practice.⁸² This license allows Woolf to continually play with conventions of biography to at once illuminate their functions and destabilize their status as foundational facts or glimpses of an actual past.

Critics often refer to a letter Woolf wrote to David Garnett thanking him for his positive review of *Flush* to point to Woolf's engagement with Lytton Strachey's revolutionary biographic practice. Craig Smith avers that in a letter: "[t]hanking David Garnett on 8 October 1933 for his positive review of *Flush*, Woolf amends her earlier statements, specifying that the 'joke with Lytton' referred only to 'the last paragraphs originally written'—a parody of Strachey's imaginative recreation of the death of Queen Victoria, which Woolf cut before publication (*Letters* 231-32)."⁸³ The archives show that Woolf did not "cut" these parodic passages, but rather amended them through the appending of subsequent paragraphs which place the initial allusive gesture into an altered context of meaning. Rather than ending with her echo of Strachey's journey into the potential thoughts of the dying monarch, Woolf added an additional allusive gesture by including Barrett Browning's poem, "Flush, or Faunus." The narrator-biographer regains omniscience in the final two paragraphs; however, she accomplishes this renewal of certainty not by re-possessing Flush's thoughts, but rather by claiming knowledge of Barrett Browning's subjectivity and anchoring this authority through the citation of "Flush, or Faunus."

In the penultimate paragraph of *Flush*, Woolf's narrative assurance returns. Her narrator-biographer confidently recounts Mrs. Browning's feelings in the past tense: "Mrs. Browning was lying, reading, on the sofa. She looked up, startled, as he came in. It was not a spirit—it was only Flush. She laughed. Then, as he leapt on to the sofa and thrust his face into hers, the words of her own poem came into her mind: [Woolf here quotes "Flush, or Faunus" in full]."⁸⁴ Woolf highlights the certainty of these Barrett Browning focused sentences by juxtaposing them with the two preceding long paragraphs

full of repeated questions, hypothetical “as if”s, and recurring withdrawals to external truths signaled by the phrase, “whatever it was, he woke [...] whatever it was, he went [...].”⁸⁵ In contrast to the sentences expressing the narrator-biographer’s struggles to pin down Flush’s thoughts, these sentences reverting to the mind of the poet are confidently phrased in the past tense and are broken up into short assertions. In these lines, Woolf’s punctuation creates almost a staccato rhythm, halting the reader at each confident verb and emphasizing the assuredness of each statement.

Woolf ends her biography by looking at Flush from different vantage points and by juxtaposing multiple genres: the parodic allusion to Strachey’s redefined biographic practice, the return to narrative omniscience about a scene which the note informs us has no factual biographical source, and the inclusion of the poem. By deflecting the finale of her biography away from its stated subject, Flush, and toward the poet, Barrett Browning, Woolf distances the reader from the biographical subject just at the moment of pathos and loss. This gesture is remarkably different from Strachey’s account of the final moments of Queen Victoria: an account which begins with the external view and facts of her death and ends with the journey inwards into realm of the dying monarch’s imagined thoughts and memories. While Strachey’s ending promises the reader a final intimacy with the queen, Woolf’s ending denies the reader this intimate glimpse and uses the poem and the final prose paragraph to elegize Flush from a distance.

Perhaps Woolf acknowledges the superiority of poetry as an elegiac medium and chooses to pay homage to Flush and to Barrett Browning’s version of Flush when the tools of biography, or “representation reality accuracy,” seem inadequate or unavailable. Yet while Woolf’s evaluation of what poetry can offer for her text and for negotiating the

past seems elevated in Flush's final moments, her biographer-narrator still gets the last word; Woolf's final narrative paragraph returns to her own fictional imaginings of Barrett-Browning's feelings at the moment of Flush's passing, and narrative *not* poetry ends the text. The final paragraph revisits many of the central themes and contrasts of the preceding text and converts the biographer-narrator's exclusion from Flush's mind into the painful shutting out of Barrett Browning herself:

She had written that poem one day years ago in Wimpole Street when she was very unhappy. Years had passed; now she was happy. She was growing old now and so was Flush. She bent down over him for a moment. Her face with its wide mouth and its great eyes and its heavy curls was still oddly like his. Broken asunder, yet made it the same mould, each, perhaps, completed what was dormant in the other. But she was woman; he was dog. Mrs. Browning went on reading. Then she looked at Flush again. But he did not look at her. An extraordinary change had come over him. 'Flush!' she cried. But he was silent. He had been alive; he was now dead. That was all. The drawing-room table, strangely enough, stood perfectly still.⁸⁶

The simplicity of the language in this final paragraph and the re-grounding of the themes of the text—the physical likeness between dog and mistress, the kinship between them and the inexorable divide between species—shifts away from the abstract allegorical symbolism of the poem and toward the basic elements of the dog-poet relationship. The unbridgeability of the two final semi-colons (“But she was woman; he was dog” and “He had been alive; he was now dead”) renders the extreme pathos of the final division between Flush and Barrett Browning (and between Flush and the reader). The sad, resigned tone of the narrator-biographer in this paragraph recalls the pathos evoked in the description of Mrs. Ramsay's death in *To the Lighthouse*—this line evokes a similar sense that someone extraordinary has passed into the past and is now unreachable by the narrative except in the barest statement of fact (“That was all”).

The tone shifts slightly in the final sentence as the narrator-biographer seems to take a parting shot at Barrett Browning's absurd interest in the occult which stretched the unbreachable gulf between the poet and Flush during the end of his life. While perhaps the narrator's assurance of the table's stillness is meant to signal the absolute emptying out of Flush's personality (no spirit left behind), the "strangely enough" does seem to poke fun at the poet who neglected her dog in order to watch table legs. Perhaps, the final jab is meant to dilute some of the pain at the loss of Flush—to divert the gaze away from the pathos of the "extraordinarily change[d]" dog who no longer returns the poet (and the reader's gaze) toward the comedic table leg (which never did). The final paragraph offers a complex exchange of gazes: beginning with the narrator-biographer (and the reader) looking at the poetess ("Her face with its wide mouth and its great eyes and its heavy curls was still oddly like his") while she looks at Flush, then having the poet look at a Flush who does not look back, and ending with the look at the stillness of the drawing-room table.⁸⁷

By ending her biography with this series of crossed gazes, Woolf emphasizes the sadness of the poet's (and the reader's) looking at a Flush who doesn't return the gaze and recalls the opening gesture of her volume, the frontispiece with "Flush" staring back at the viewer. Like the frontispiece's playful doubling which layers the author over her subjects—the arm is at once Woolf's and Barrett Browning's and the spaniel at once Flush and Pinka—the final gestures of the text with the intersecting gazes and the juxtaposed genres offer multiple vantage points onto the past and onto the biographic subjects. In her 1939 essay, "The Art of Biography," Woolf articulates her vision of a modern biographical practice by using the language of photography: "... since we live in

an age when a thousand cameras are pointed, by newspapers, and diaries, at every character from every angle, [the biographer] must be prepared to admit contradictory versions of the same face. Biography will enlarge its scope by hanging up looking-glasses at odd corners. And yet from all this diversity it will bring out, not a riot of confusion, but a richer unity” (CE4, 226). By looking at the palimpsestic portraits of Flush rendered in the book’s generic play and material forms, we can recover a richer sense of Woolf’s engagement with her practice of modern “looking-glass” biography. In *Flush*, Woolf develops a new form built by juxtaposing the literary genres of biography, fiction, and poetry and the visual media of photography, painted formal portraits, and modernist line drawing illustrations and by drawing from their different vantage points onto the past. By making *Flush*’s central project that of defining its literary and extra-literary practices in relation to and in contradistinction from past forms, Woolf creates a material textual experience that announces its own newness, its multiple levels of generic experimentation, and its verbal and visual modernity.

Pamela Caughie has argued persuasively that critics should return to *Flush* in order to complicate our stories of canon-formation and of literary history: “Reading *Flush* can show us that readings, texts, and canons are always mixed, never pure, and that we give them the illusion of purity, permanence, and prestige by reading efficiently, straining off the excess that would expose this rather messy and conflicted system. To read *Flush* as the excess, not the marginal, is to read it in terms of what Derrida calls the law of excess, which corrupts distinctions between genres, or between popular and high-brow, mutt and pure-bred.”⁸⁸ My reading of the complex generic negotiations in the material form of *Flush: A Biography* also works to revise the usual story of Woolf’s negotiation

of the literary marketplace and a mass readership through her experimentation particularly with excess—in terms of media, gazes, genres—in this neglected mixed-breed of a text. However, more than just arguing for a renewed critical interest in *Flush* as a best-seller, I also argue for the book's importance in revealing the ways in which Woolf continually connected her thinking about literary genre and readerly expectations to her engagement with different genres of print culture and with traditions in book design. Woolf's exploration of the values of multiple competing genres in the Hogarth Edition of *Flush: A Biography* and in her multiple contemporaneous writings of the early 1930s speaks to her understanding that in order to renovate literary genres and readerly expectations for those genres she should also engage with and redesign the material forms through which those genres circulated to the public. Woolf's position as co-owner of the Hogarth Press made her exceptionally able to achieve this thorough-going type of engagement and also made her particularly aware of the nuanced expectations of the literary marketplace and of her readers and consumers. The Hogarth Edition of *Flush* shows us that as part of her career-long investment in finding new forms for the modern marketplace Woolf was crucially invested in revamping the material forms of modernism.

¹ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV, 1931-1935*, edited by Anne Olivier Bell (New York, NY: Harcourt, 1982), 40. Hereafter referred to as *Diary* with the volume and page numbers.

² Lytton Strachey's biographies *Eminent Victorians* and *Queen Victoria* were groundbreaking in their innovative re-shaping of the genre of biography in many ways, however, his frontispieces and bibliographic codes do not stray from more traditional framing gestures. *Eminent Victorians* opens with a severe-looking photographic frontispiece of Cardinal Manning (the subject of the volume's first biographic vignette) and each subsequent vignette—Florence Nightingale, Dr. Arnold, and General Gordon—are all framed by similarly dignified, posed portraits (all of which are reproductions of photographs with the exception of Dr. Arnold which was “reproduced from a steel engraving in Stanley's *Life of Arnold*” according to its caption.) As this caption notes, while Strachey experimented with the biographic in other ways, he did not deviate from the usual “portraits”—even borrowing the same images from other more traditional biographies—and advertising the more traditional portraits as part of the appeal of the book on the title page as “With Portraits.” Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1918) 206. The frontispiece from Harcourt Brace's edition of *Queen Victoria* features a more idyllic painted rendering of its subject amidst her family; the image is listed in the “Illustrations” as “Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the Royal Family. From the picture of F. Winterhalter, at Buckingham Palace.” Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921).

³ For an illuminating discussion of the nuances of early novelistic frontispieces—and particularly of Swift's play with conventions in the “author” frontispieces of *Gulliver* in early editions of *Gulliver's Travels*—see Janine Barchas's excellent essay “Prefiguring genre: frontispiece portraits from 'Gulliver's Travels' to 'Millenium Hall,’” *Studies in the Novel*, 30.2 (Summer 1998), 260-287. Interestingly, Barchas also comments on the trend of non-human narrators (“it” narrators – from dogs to inanimate objects) and mentions one of *Flush*'s precursors: “Coventry's it-narrated novel participates in the author-portrait conceit, including a suitable frontispiece that depicts the canine hero majestically seated on his tasseled dog bed [...] Tweaking readerly curiosity, Coventry's frontispiece is emblematic of this subgenre's innovative materialism [...] As a parodic derivative of the author-portrait model, Pompey's portrait also unambiguously mocks (as it exploits) the novel's reliance upon graphic gimmickry to garner attention” (275).

⁴ Flush Folder 556, Hogarth Press Business Archive, Reading University, Reading, UK. Interestingly, the frontispiece is labeled “Flush” in the list of Illustrations in the American first edition and presumably could have been mistaken for the “real” dog by many consumers. However, a careful viewer may have been skeptical about the uniformity of the image of Flush presented in the Harcourt Brace edition's bibliographic code due to the difference in the colors of the coats of the blackish dust-jacket dog and the much lighter coated frontispiece canine.

⁵ A fan-letter from a reader of the serialized *Flush*, hailing from Sherwood Terrace, Yonkers, New York, describes some of the other mysteries surrounding particular images of Flush and the specifics of his death:

“Dear Mrs. Woolf

I have rejoiced in [?] splendid press concerning “Flush,” even as I reveled in the installments as they appeared in the Atlantic. I understand there are valuable notes in the work which I am sorry to say I have not yet seen I shall hope to do so soon. I am wondering if you solved the question as to when and how Flush died, or if you used invention barring the existence of any record. It has always seemed strange to me that there is no mention of his passing [out? or act?] in her printed correspondence. One cannot tolerate [Arabel’s?] destroying her letters!

And I wonder also if you found the portrait at Baliol? I heard from the librarian early in August that the Browning treasures were in the safe during repairs but he would write me later and that hasn’t eventuated. I must write to remind him.

I found E.B.B.’s own sketch of Flush’s head in the Thomas J. Wise Bibliography of her writings, privately printed, opposite page 46, but it was merely a profile of the head. However, it was the head of a cocker as the one purporting to be of Flush in R.B.’s Album certainly was not unless taken in extreme puppyhood -- and Flush was no puppy when R.B. first knew him. So one couldn’t feel sure. Dead Hood, who has edited the letters, has not assumed the identity.

If it will not be an imposition, I shall be so glad to know when you solve the mystery, if indeed you do. All success be yours! Sincerely, Harriet Gaylord (dated at bottom November fourteenth). She has scrawled on the side in the margin: “The volume of R.B.’s letters was published in April, Yale University Press. Your work is utterly delightful” (Monk’s House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK)

⁶ Letter dated May 1, 1933 from “The Hogarth Press (Manager)” to Donald Brace. (Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Correspondence between Harcourt Brace and the Hogarth Press, Folder 12.)

⁷ Press Clippings Folder for *Flush*, Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK.

⁸ I have searched exhaustively at the Hogarth Press Business Archive, the Leonard Woolf Papers and the Monks House Papers at the University of Sussex, in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, at the R&R Clark Printers Archive at the National Library of Scotland, and I’ve corresponded about the matter with Karen Kukil, Associate Curator of the Special Collections of Smith College, Mortimer Rare Book Room.

⁹ Unlike the golden Pinka, Flush was “red” as indicated in a letter to Woolf from F.B. Adams Jr. housed in the Monks House Papers; Adams Jr. writes: “I read your letter to my mother and she was more than relieved to know that Flush was “red.” That is the color our cocker was once (during the War, I think), but now he is nearly all white, when he is not too dirty. He is the perfect example of the country gentlemen who has kept his physique and kept his form” (Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK).

¹⁰ Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography, Volume Two: Mrs. Woolf 1912-1941*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), 175.

¹¹ *The Letters of Virginia Woolf, IV*, ed. Nigel Nicholson and Joanne Trautmann (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 380. Hereafter referred to as *Letters* with the volume and page numbers.

¹² I do think it likely that Henry was used for the Hogarth cover image since that seems to depict a different dog from the frontispiece dog and it's clipped nature removes background details (thus any image of Henry could have worked rather than one with a specific background scene).

¹³ As Diane Gillespie notes in *The Multiple Muses of Virginia Woolf* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993) from evidence in Woolf's correspondence and diaries, Woolf's interest in photography and her active photo-taking and developing increased right at the moment in which she was working on *Flush*: "As late as 1931, she reported to her sister that she and Leonard had bought a new camera (L 4:361). Throughout the following month, she reported taking and developing photographs (L 4: 364, 365, 367, 371, 378; D 4:40)" (130).

¹⁴ Entry for Friday, September 16, 1932, *Diary*, Vol 4., 124.

¹⁵ Woolf's fears about her own celebrity status and the potentially prurient interests of the public in her legs perhaps speak to her growing fame during her life (and increasing throughout the 1930s) and her worries about people writing biographies about her (like Holtby's). Interestingly, one intrepid author attempted to include the Woolfs and their dog Pinka in her "volume of short biographies." The letter from a Miss Lewis[?] is dated March 11th, 1935 and is addressed to Mr. Woolf: "Dear Mr. Woolf – I venture to make a request to you about your dog Pinker. I am doing a book for Messrs. Constable on the dogs of famous writers – a volume of short biographies. They will be written purely from an external point of view and will include as many extracts as possible from the letters and writings of their owners. I should feel very honoured if you and Mrs. Woolf would allow me to include Pinker as [my?] living representative in this collection. You may like to know what company he would keep. This is my proposed list:

1. William Cowper's Bean
2. Byron's Boatswain
3. Scott's Maida
4. Charles Lamb's Dash
5. The Brontes' Keeper and Flossy
6. Mr + Mrs Browning's Flush
7. Mr + Mrs Carlyle's Nero
8. Geraldine Jewsbury's Kennet
9. Mathew Arnold's Geist + Rover
10. Hardy's Wessex
11. Mr. + Mrs. Woolf's Pinker
12. One other – from the nineties.

I shall of course treat *Flush* with both care and respect.

It would be very kind indeed if you would let me use your letter in “The Monologue” about Pinker + your marmosette, + if I might add a few facts about his habits + mode of living, I could make a biographical sketch of about 2,500 words. I would not publish anything without first submitting to you + would scrap the whole article if it was not to your liking.” Leonard responds to Miss Lewis on the 13th of March, 1935: “We should not mind your including Pinka, but I am afraid that we could not give you ourselves any kind of personal information as it would seem too much like self-advertisement. I could give you her age, origin, and pedigree and of course you could use any information which you could get elsewhere. I should have no objection to your using my letter in the Monologue. If you do write it, I should rather it were not submitted to us before publication. I hope you will not think us churlish over this.” He then gives the suggestion to include Argos (Homer’s dog from 17th book of *Odyssey*). (LWP Box G, Leonard Woolf Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK).

¹⁶ *Diary, Vol IV*, 40.

¹⁸ This remark suggests that Woolf is playing with the new style of untraditional biography employed by Strachey in his *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and is taken from a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell on the 23rd of February 1933, *Letters*: V, 161-162. This letter is cited in Christine Reynier’s essay, “The Impure Art of Biography: Virginia Woolf’s *Flush*,” in *Mapping the Self: Space, Identity, Discourse in British Auto/Biography*, edited by Frédéric Regard, (Publications de l’Universite de Saint-Etienne, 2003), 187.

¹⁹ Pamela Caughie discusses the implicit evaluation of *Flush* as “serious” for readers in 1933 and for current critics and canon formation; she cites Janice Radway’s documentation of the Book of the Month Club’s tendency to place serious books as “alternate” selections. Pamela Caughie, “Flush and the Literary Canon: Oh Where Oh Where Has That Little Dog Gone?,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 10, no. 1, (Spring 1991), 56. As B.J. Kirkpatrick has documented, 12,680 copies were published by Hogarth initially on October 5th 1933 (with a second impression of 3000 later in October). This Hogarth edition was marked as the “Large Paper Edition” and it sold for 7 shillings and 6 pence in the United Kingdom and the book was so popular that it was almost immediately incorporated into the Hogarth’s Uniform Edition of Woolf’s work with an additional impression of 11,762 copies were issued in the smaller format (with Bell’s illustrations converted to endpapers) for the standard Uniform Edition price of 5 shillings in November 1933. The Harcourt Brace edition in the United States was also first published on October 5th 1933 at a price of \$2 , with Bell’s illustrations as endpapers. Initially Harcourt published 7500 copies and between the initial offering and January 1956 there were 12 re-impressions totaling 23,782 copies. B.J. Kirkpatrick, *A Bibliography of Virginia Woolf*, Third Edition (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1982), 50-52.

²⁰ Julia Briggs, *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2005), 299-300. The response of many “common readers” is evident in the massive amounts of press

clippings from all varieties of publications—some listing *Flush* along with other books about dogs, some arguing for it as high literature by Woolf, and some advertising the sensationalism of the story. This latter type of response is emblemized in a review in “Everybody’s Weekly printed on January 6, 1934 under the large headline – “World’s Most Devoted Lover Was a Dog: And his mistress forgot all about him” by the Hon. Angus Holden. The second subheading reads: “Here is the story of the most famous dog in history—a story that will bring a lump into your throat.” Even this review is illustrated with an image of a dog (maybe a spaniel (very dark)) being forced into a bag: “He was tumbled into a bag” (caption). Surprisingly, Woolf’s name isn’t even mentioned until the last paragraph which reads: “Such is the fascinating story, told by Mrs. Virginia Woolf.” The reviewer retells most of the story of the book and uses punchy sub-headlines throughout (“Scented an Enemy”, “Dead or Alive?” and “Too Late!”) and many bolded sections to emphasize the dramatic moments. Shockingly, this reviewer actually rewrites the ending: “Now, instead of lying all day at her feet, he was forced to spend his time amongst the old women who sold fruit and flowers in the market-place. But one day as he lay there in the shade of an enormous pumpkin he found his misery and loneliness intolerable. He would compel his mistress to love him again! So off he dashed to the house and found Mrs. Browning lying on her sofa, her eyes blank and staring, as if in a trance. Quickly he sprang on to the sofa and thrust his face into hers, his eyes imploring affection. But she looked through him, as if he were invisible. Flush pawed her sharply, despairingly, and after a pause, she came out of her trance and looked at him kindly. **“Dear Flush,” she said....But it was too late. She was speaking to the dead. Poor Flush had died of a broken heart.** Such is the fascinating story, told by Mrs. Virginia Woolf (“Flush,” Hogarth Press, 7s. 6d.), a true tale of a brave and loving cocker spaniel who lived just ninety years ago.” (pg. 8 of the Everybody’s Weekly”). (Press Clippings Folder for Flush, Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK.)

²¹ Woolf responded in her diary to an early anonymous review in *The Granta* which described the book as a sign of “the passing of a potentially great writer who perished for lack of an intelligent audience” (*Diary*, Vol. VI, 186). This early review also declared that *Flush* marked “the end of Mrs. Woolf as a live force” (*Diary*, Vol. VI, 186).

²² Press Clippings folder for *Flush* in the Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK.

²³ Pamela Caughie, “*Flush* and the Literary Canon: Oh Where Oh Where Has That Little Dog Gone?,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 10, no. 1, (Spring 1991), 52.

²⁴ I was able to examine the microfilmed versions of Woolf’s notebooks containing *Flush* at the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. *Flush* has been mixed, composite, and adulterated by other texts since it was first drafted by Woolf in one of her reading notebooks: in fact, she drafted it in the same notebook that includes *London Scene* essays and several pieces from her *Second Common Reader*. Even in draft form, then, *Flush* was already generically blurred and abutted by other texts that Woolf was thinking through and composing at the same time and on literally the same pages. Over

the course of the composition of *Flush*, Woolf was working on numerous other literary and publishing ventures.

²⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Flush: A Biography* (London, UK: Hogarth Press, 1933) 154. Hereafter referred to as *Flush* with page numbers.

²⁶ Virginia Woolf, *The Second Common Reader* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1960)183. Hereafter referred to as SCR with page numbers.

²⁷ For a rich account of literary tourism in the modern period see Andrea Zengulys' *Modernism and the Locations of Literary Heritage* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Zengulys analyzes Woolf's essays on literary tourism and her discussion of Carlyle's hat seems particularly resonant with this moment in "Aurora Leigh."

²⁸ SCR, 183.

²⁹ SCR, 184-185.

³⁰ SCR, 185.

³¹ SCR, 185.

³² SCR, 188.

³³ SCR, 188.

³⁴ SCR, 188.

³⁵ SCR, 189.

³⁶ SCR, 189.

³⁷ SCR, 189.

³⁸ SCR, 189.

³⁹ SCR, 189, 183.

⁴⁰ SCR, 189.

⁴¹ SCR, 189.

⁴² SCR, 189-190.

⁴³ SCR, 190.

⁴⁴ *SCR*, 190.

⁴⁵ *SCR*, 190.

⁴⁶ *SCR*, 190.

⁴⁷ *SCR*, 190.

⁴⁸ *SCR*, 190.

⁴⁹ *SCR*, 191.

⁵⁰ *SCR*, 191.

⁵¹ *SCR*, 192.

⁵² Virginia Woolf, *A Letter to A Young Poet*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), 6. Woolf then goes on to discuss the problem of being a poet in “this particular autumn of 1931” and Lehmann’s apparent claim that this particular time is the “hardest case [for poets] that has ever been known” (8). She tries to deny this claim to exceptionalism but then “admits” that the modern age (i.e. during the autumn of 1931) the conditions of readers are different than before: “For the first time in history there are readers—a large body of people, occupied in business, in sport, in nursing their grandfathers, in tying up parcels behind counters—they all read now; and they want to be told how to read and what to read; and their teachers—the reviewers, the lecturers, the broadcasters—must in all humanity make reading easy for them; assure them that literature is violent and exciting, full of heroes and villains; of hostile forces perpetually in conflict; of fields strewn with bones; of solitary victors riding off on white horses wrapped in black cloaks to meet their death at the turn of the road. A pistol shot rings out. ‘The age of romance was over. The age of realism had begun’—you know that sort of thing. No of course writers themselves know very well that there is not a word of truth in all this—there are no battles, and no murders, and no defeats and no victories. But as it is of the utmost importance that readers should be amused, writers acquiesce. The dress themselves up. They act their parts. One leads; the other follows. One is romantic, the other realist” (9).

⁵³ Woolf, *A Letter to A Young Poet*, 12.

⁵⁴ *Flush*, 13-14.

⁵⁵ This poem appeared in Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Poems* (London, UK: Edward Moxon, 1844) and I am using the online text published from that edition, edited and copyrighted by Ian Lancashire (Web Development Group, Information Technology Services, and the University of Toronto Libraries, 2008), <http://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poem/245.html>.

⁵⁶ *Flush*, 38-39.

⁵⁷ Woolf includes Barrett Browning's "Flush, or Faunus" in full but without a title at the end of her book on page 149 of the Hogarth Edition of *Flush*.

⁵⁸ Poem appears in *Flush*, 149.

⁵⁹ Reynier, 188.

⁶⁰ *Diary*, vol. *IV*, 181.

⁶¹ Woolf responds in her diary to the review of Geoffrey Grigson, a "poet and critic and at this time literary editor of the Morning Posts, wrote of *Flush* in the issue of 6 October, 1933: 'Its continual mock-heroic tone, its bantering pedantry, its agile verbosity make it the most tiresome book which Mrs Woolf has yet written' (cited in *Diary*, vol. *IV*, 185). She also responds to the nastier *Granta* review (25 October 1933): which laments that "... the deadly facility of [*Flush*] combined with its popular success mean ... the end of Mrs Woolf as a live force. We must mourn the passing of a potentially great writer who perished for lack of an intelligent audience' (cited in *Diary*, vol. *IV*, 186). About this second review, Woolf writes: "I wish I could get it [her head] full & calm & unconscious. This last is difficult, owing to *Flush*, owing to the perpetual little spatter of comment that keeps me awake. Yesterday the *Granta* said I was now defunct. Orlando Waves *Flush* represent the death of a potentially great writer. This is only a rain drop; I mean the snub some little pimpled undergraduate likes to administer, just as he would put a frog in ones bed: but then there's all the letters, & the requests for pictures—so many that, foolishly perhaps, I wrote a sarcastic letter to the N.S.—thus procuring more rain drops" (186). I am interested in again how the criticism becomes gendered here again, although in a less clear way—with the pimply undergraduate and the frog. Also, I am not quite sure what Woolf means by the "requests for pictures," but she did receive some fan mail about the book.

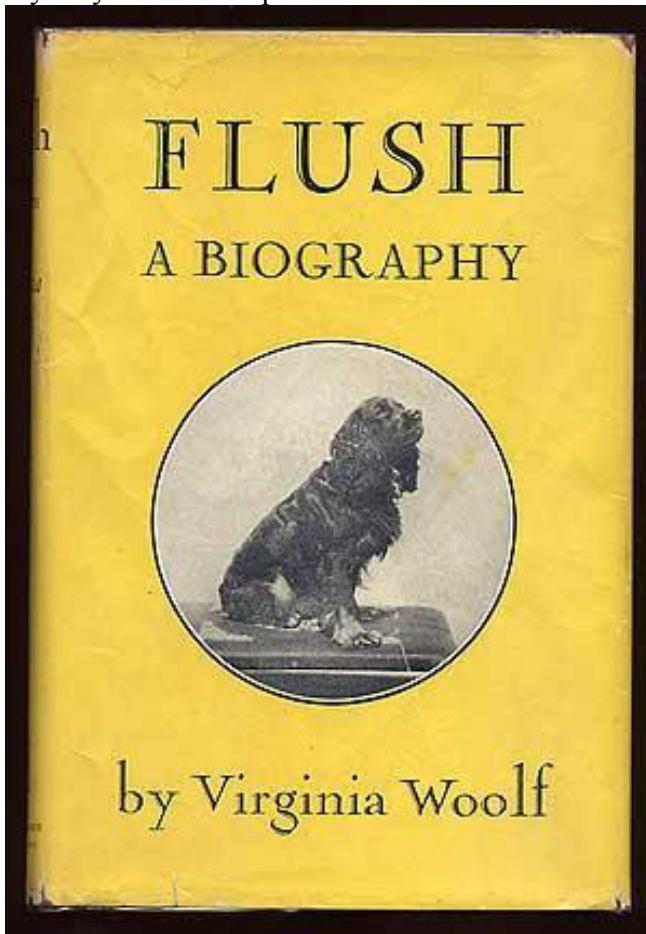
⁶² *Letters*, vol. *V*, 236.

⁶³ Illustration is just one of the relatively aggressive ways in which Woolf and the Hogarth Press attempted to market *Flush* to a mass audience. They solicited help in attempting to place the work serially in different venues (including *Good Housekeeping*) and they advertised the book in the theatre programme for the play "The Barretts of Wimpole Street": In a letter to Messrs Payne, Jennings & Killick on February 6th, 1935, the Hogarth Press writes: "This is to confirm that we wish to book a quarter page in the theatre programme of the Piccadilly Theatre for weeks during the run of The Barretts of Wimpole Street, beginning Monday next. I enclose a copy herewith, and should be glad if you would ask your printers to display it as clearly as possible, and to give it a top right hand in as good position as you can." (*Flush* folder 556, Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, UK.)

⁶⁴ Diane Gillespie, *The Sister's Arts: The Writing and Painting of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 123. Hereafter referred to as Gillespie, *Sister's Arts* with the page numbers.

⁶⁵ Flush File 556, Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Reading, UK.

⁶⁶ The dust-jacket for the Harcourt Brace first American edition presents a different vantage point onto Flush by offering its circular design as a sort of window into the photographic image (see below). The contrast between the bright yellow of the cover and the black and white of the image makes the photographic world of Flush appear almost as a separate space – behind the visual plane of the yellow cover that the viewer (and presumably, the consumer of the book) will enter through the pages. You may have noticed that this spaniel appears to be a different spaniel than the one depicted in the cut-out Hogarth image; it appears to be blacker in color and posed on a different stool. All researches have failed to fix the precise identity of either spaniel, adding a layer of mystery to Woolf's portrait of Flush.



Harcourt Brace dust-jacket for *Flush* (1933)

⁶⁷ These demands are outlined in a letter from Book Society Ltd. (UK) to Margaret West (Hogarth Press Manager): “In this particular case, I think I should be taking little risk in assuming that the Committee will probably want to put this book on our Recommended List. Such inclusion, however, would make very little difference to your initial printing order. If you have the question of a possible “choice” in mind we shall be up against the problem of the shortness of this charming work. I note in your recent list that it is provisionally priced at 6s., whereas the whole system of our arrangement with members is that our monthly chosen books should not be less than 7s.6d. and not more than 10s.6d. If the Hogarth Press desired “Flush” to be considered in terms of a “choice” it would be in order to discuss the question of whether, through specially notable production (in terms of paper, binding, wrapper, possible additional illustrations, etc.) the book could be issued at 7s.6d.” (Flush folder 556, Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, UK)

⁶⁸ The Harcourt Brace edition that circulated in the United States used Bell’s drawings as end-papers as did the Hogarth Press’s follow up printing in the Uniform Edition format. Bell redrew the images for the Hogarth one (which initially planned to use them as end papers for the large edition, but ended up just using them as facing page plates to raise price of book to meet the Book Society demands. Letter from Leonard to Vanessa about the illustrations dated 12 June 1933:

“I wonder whether you would possibly consider the following proposition. Would it be possible to turn the drawings you made for the end papers into four separate illustrations for the large sized edition. We are now going to have two editions of the book, one large and the other small sized. We should use the end papers as originally designed as endpapers in the small sized edition, but we should like if possible to have them as four separate illustrations bound in on separate pages in the large sized edition. The size of the page in the large sized edition works out at roughly 8 ½” by 5 ½”. I imagine therefore that for this to be possible you would have to redraw the designs, quite apart from the fact that each two as they now are form one whole. We should of course pay you a second fee for this if you can and will do it. I am afraid that as usual we are in a hurry, so that would you let me know by return whether the suggestion is possible, and if it is, would it be possible to let me have the drawings in a week? If it is not possible, we shall of course use the illustrations as end papers in both editions, but I shall have to set about getting extra photographs. I enclose a copy of the endpapers as printed for the small sized edition.” Vanessa responded saying: “Yes, I think it is possible to re-arrange the drawings as you suggest + I can get them done in a week – But I think the reproductions you have sent me are rough copies aren’t they? The look to me anyhow less well done than the proofs I had. Could you possibly let me have well printed copies printed in black, which is I suppose what will be used for the illustrations, or could the be done in brown? [...] anyhow in whatever [?] be used – as I shall use the reproductions, cut them out as I want them, stick them [to] paper of the right size + draw + [?] them. Then the whole thing can be photographed [...] I feel rather strongly that the end papers would work better printed in brown even if the cover is green – One often does have end papers in a different colour from the covers + the brown I chose seemed to me rather good with the green. Do you think its impossible?” (Flush folder 556, Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, UK).

⁶⁹ Diane Gillespie has also commented on this lack of attention and her work on the subject has contributed to counteracting this neglect: “Vanessa Bell’s desire to respond visually to Virginia’s works did result in illustrations to several of the shorter pieces of fiction: Kew Gardens, “The Mark on the Wall,” and four stories in *Monday or Tuesday*; Vanessa also illustrated *Flush*. With some exceptions, critics slight Woolf’s short works, dismiss them as early experiments that prepared the way for the major novels, or treat them as respites from more serious work. They neglect Vanessa Bell’s illustrations almost entirely. The same is true of the cover or dust-jacket designs she provided for most of her sister’s other books”(Gillespie, *Sisters’ Arts*, 116).

⁷⁰ Gillespie, *Sister’s Arts*, 117-188.

⁷¹ Gillespie, *Sister’s Arts*, 143.

⁷² Gillespie, *Sister’s Arts*, 145.

⁷³ In the other two Bell drawings, “Miss Mitford Takes Flush for a Walk” and “So she knitted and he dozed,” the sense of depth in the image is complicated and somewhat flattened by the decorative pattern-like quality of the lines.

⁷⁴ Images provided by the Smith Archive, Mortimer Rare Book Room.

⁷⁵ Interestingly, the image of Flush’s Birthplace is taken from a more conventionally illustrated book, *The Correspondence of Mary Russell Mitford* as revealed in a letter from Ernest Benn Limited Publishers on 15 June 1933 to Miss West (Manager of Hogarth Press): “With reference to your call here on Tuesday, so far as we are concerned you are quite at liberty to reproduce the illustration of Miss Mitford’s Cottage at Three Mile Cross, which appeared in THE CORRESPONDENCE OF MARY RUSSELL MITFORD, in your forthcoming book on Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s Spaniel.” (Flush folder, Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, UK). Obviously, in the context of Woolf’s book the image signifies very differently with Woolf’s method (suggested by the playful frontispiece) undermining the representational certainty and claims to “reality” suggested by the traditional “birthplace” image (see image below).



“Flush’s Birthplace” Illustration in Hogarth *Flush*

⁷⁶ Berg Collection Manuscripts, New York Public Library.

⁷⁷ Berg Collection Manuscripts, New York Public Library.

⁷⁸ The final paragraph of Strachey’s text presents the dying monarch as she appeared externally and then enters the realm of what she was “perhaps” thinking in the “secret chambers of [her] consciousness”: “She herself, as she lay blind and silent, seemed to those who watched her to be divested of all thinking—to have glided already, unawares into oblivion. Yet, perhaps, in the secret chambers of consciousness, she had her thoughts, too. Perhaps her fading mind called up once more the shadows of the past to float before it, and retracted, for the last time, the vanished visions of that long history—passing back and back, through the cloud of years, to older and ever older memories—to the spring woods at Osborne, so full of primroses for Lord Beaconsfield—to Lord Palmerston’s queer clothes and high demeanor, and Albert’s face under the green lamp, and Albert’s first stag at Balmoral, and Albert in his blue and silver uniform, and the Baron coming in through a doorway, and the Lord M. dreaming at Windsor with the rooks cawing in the elm-trees, and the Archbishop of Canterbury on his knees in the dawn, and the old King’s turkey-cock ejaculations, and Uncle Leopold’s soft voice at Claremont, and Lehzen with the globes, and her mother’s feathers sweeping down towards her, and a great old repeater-watch of her father’s in its tortoise-shell case, and a

yellow rug, and some friendly flounces of sprigged muslin, and the trees and the grass at Kensington” (Strachey 423-424).

⁷⁹ *Flush*, 147-48.

⁸⁰ *Flush*, 162-63.

⁸¹ Berg Collection Manuscripts, New York Public Library.

⁸² Rose MacCaulay expressed her admiration for “the documentation” of the book. In her review in the *Spectator* October 6, 1933, Rose MacCaulay writes: “No one but Mrs. Woolf could have written this book, and she has brought to it most of her characteristic gifts—irony, humour, affectionate comprehension, poetic imagination, and the delicate, supple and lively prose of which these qualities form the texture. The result is a book of irresistible grace and charm. It has four very pleasing Vanessa Bell drawings (but has not the fruit-stall woman over-much of our then Queen in her mien?) and other pictures, and one misprint on page 148. One should add that the documentation is admirable.” (Flush Press Clippings Folder, Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK).

⁸³ Craig Smith, “Across the Widest Gulf: Nonhuman Subjectivity in Virginia Woolf’s “Flush”,” *Twentieth Century Literature: A Scholarly and Critical Journal*, 48.3 (Fall 2002), 358.

⁸⁴ *Flush*, 149.

⁸⁵ *Flush*, 148-49.

⁸⁶ *Flush*, 149-50.

⁸⁷ Interestingly, one contemporary critic (E. J. Scovell) was highly affronted at the final sentence in *Flush* and wrote in a review in *Time and Tide* October 14, 1933: “This story, the flower of a profound sympathetic imagination, has the surface brightness, that perfection of form, and beauty in the tissue of every sentence, that distinguish nearly all Mrs. Woolf’s work. It has besides a quality that appears in her critical essays, hardly ever in her novels, a sly, often ironical, urbanity. Sometimes Mrs. Woolf is almost too like some lady—some charming hostess perhaps—who can talk so that uncouth members of a younger generation think with respect, ‘This is not talking, this is conversation’; who can talk with sincerity on serious subjects, and yet, by a subtle suggestion of detachment, or self-mockery, keep what she says, and what other people say too, continuously light and cool and civilized [...] No one else can utter profundities with such a drawing-room air; as if, when we are tired of them, she has only to ring the bell, and the maid will come and clear them away. Generally this is charming; but at moments there is something shocking, something that flashes upon the reader a knowledge of the depths to which callousness and irresponsibility could go, in this cultured levity. I say this because I regret the last sentence in *Flush*; and it is particularly sad to regret the last sentence of

such an enchanting story.” (Flush Press Clippings Folder, Monks House Papers, University of Sussex, Falmer, UK).

⁸⁸ Pamela Caughie, “Flush and the Literary Canon: Oh Where Oh Where Has That Little Dog Gone?,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, Vol. 10, no. 1, (Spring 1991), 62.

Chapter 5

Publishing Modernism: The Transatlantic Experiments of the Boni & Liveright and Hogarth Presses

Introduction:

The previous four chapters of this project have focused on the ways in which Henry James, T.S. Eliot, and Virginia Woolf engaged with cultures of print and with the literary marketplace and on the ways in which that engagement inspired their different projects of formal experimentation. These chapters argue for a new understanding of the ways in which modernist authors developed their innovative formal techniques and the material forms through which their texts circulated to readers in dialogue with specific cultures of print and the cultural expectations adhering to different print forms. This chapter shifts its focus away from the authorial side of the story toward the institutional context of key publishing houses. Here I will examine the ways in which specific presses enabled modernists to redefine material forms and the ways in which modernist formal experimentation was marketed and sold to consumers. This chapter explores the productions and practices of the Woolfs' Hogarth Press and of the Boni and Liveright Press and the ways in which these two institutions helped to shape the material forms of modernism. Both Presses were active for several decades at the height of modernist literary output and formal experimentation and both houses published many texts which have become cornerstones of both canonical and less canonical modernisms. I argue for a closer attention to these two somewhat daring and untraditional vessels of print culture,

to their cultural impact, and to their material interaction with modernist formal experimentation.

By shifting the focus toward presses rather than individual authors, I hope to historicize and contextualize the stories that modernism told about itself and the ways in which those stories were leveraged to appeal to different consumers in different markets. More specifically, I am interested in the ways in which the aggressive advertising and somewhat unorthodox financial balancing act performed by Horace Liveright enabled his promotion and publication of many unknown experimental writers who went on to develop into major figures in the modernist canon and culture. Boni & Liveright utilized the firm's unencumbered position to develop new models for marketing their products and to foster undiscovered talent. They were able to offset the risk of their formally experimental modernist texts by effectively hawking the prestige of these works in their marketing campaigns and by balancing their lists with other types of higher grossing products, including the Modern Library series and sensational best-sellers. On the other side of the Atlantic, I am interested in how the Woolfs' Hogarth Press—begun as a hobby—operated under a continual tension between the Press's drive to circulate texts and figures otherwise not in print to serve a wider cultural market and the undeniable market appeal of the Press's hand-made, visually intricate, expensive, and Bloomsbury-coterie-centered products. The Hogarth Press depended on its profits from its publishing of Virginia Woolf's works and leveraged its connections with the Bloomsbury elite to create material forms that reflected the Press's unique ability to draw on these resources in order to publish collaborative, hybrid texts and to experiment with combining media and mixing genres in Hogarth productions.

My chapter alternates between a wider view of the histories and printing practices of each Press and a close-up view of several readings of texts whose formal strategies become particularly legible in this material context. I begin this chapter by focusing on the two first editions of Eliot's *The Waste Land* in book form in order to explore and contrast the two publishing houses which produced this key text of modernism. These two publishing houses—joint in their publishing of this poem—operated on different sides of the Atlantic and were situated with very different vantage points onto the literary marketplace. Each press made the most of its position and performed a complex balancing act to successfully promote and consolidate its own version and canon of modernist literature while also developing its own reputation and fortune as a publishing house. The Hogarth Press and the house of Boni & Liveright were in many ways wildly different institutions with very different aims and practices, but they were joined in their interest in and production of Eliot's poem and in their substantial contributions toward “publishing modernism.” To argue for Hogarth's unique, collaborative and multi-generic house-style, I also briefly analyze the Hogarth Press editions of Julia Margaret Cameron's *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men & Fair Women* (1926), a text which was doubly-framed by introductions by both Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry, and *Two Stories* (1917), a collaborative effort of Leonard and Virginia Woolf and wood-cut illustrator Dora Carrington. Additionally, I explore how Jean Toomer's *Cane* (1923) and Djuna Barnes's *A Book* (1923)—both collections of short pieces of multiple genres, including stories, vignettes, poems, and drawings—were marketed by Boni and Liveright and how these generically hybrid and formally experimental texts can be understood as part of the larger project of the press. By alternating between the panoramic view of the

cultural field and the localized readings of exemplary texts produced by these presses, I argue for the importance of reading modernist material forms in the contexts of their engagements with transatlantic print culture. The chapter aims to offer a perspective on the broader cultural impact of these presses on modernism and on modern print culture and also to show how the texts that I focus on can be read differently and productively through the lens of their production by these specific publishing houses. By focusing on the ways in which these two presses operated within their specific socio-historical contexts and leveraged their unique points of access to create their own versions of modernism, I argue that we should understand that the material forms of modernism were experiments in print culture not only in their composition, but also in their publication.

Publishing *The Waste Land*

“I assure you the Press is worse than 6 children at breast simultaneously [...] I have just finished setting up the whole of Mr Eliot’s [sic] poem with my own hands: You see how my hand trembles. Don’t blame your eyes. It is my writing.”—Virginia Woolf in a letter to Barbara Bagenal dated July 8th, 1923¹

“I’m disappointed that Eliot’s material is as short. *Can’t he add anything?*” —Horace Liveright in a letter to Ezra Pound²

In the first epigraph above, Virginia Woolf comments on her physical labor in the production of *The Waste Land* and its circulation in book form. As I argued previously, the female voices of Vivien Eliot and her maid Ellen Kelland inflected and shaped the poem’s narrative strategies, and here in this final chapter I begin thinking about “publishing modernism” by considering the ways in which Woolf’s shaking hands contributed their own part in the production of the poem, in its cultural capital, and in its physical circulation. The Hogarth Press published Eliot’s poem in book form in

September of 1923 and while no critic provides an extended reading of the Hogarth Edition, many acknowledge that the poem's "publication by the Hogarth Press expanded Eliot's British audience and helped to consolidate the Woolfs' reputation as publishers of modernist writing."³ As the epigraph makes palpable, the hand-printed books of the Hogarth Press (including Eliot's *Poems* (1919) and *The Waste Land* (1923)) are powerfully auratic objects that bear physical traces of Virginia Woolf's handiwork. Indeed, Woolf was intimately involved in "virtually every aspect of production, from typesetting and proofreading to finding, stitching, and sewing the covers" and was also personally involved in the selling and marketing of her lists: "she was constantly involved in getting books to the public – identifying possible subscribers, answering inquiries, 'traveling' the books to dealers throughout England, and wrapping and mailing copies to purchasers."⁴ In a letter to Vanessa detailing her experience placing Eliot's *Poems*, Woolf links the auratic quality of her hand-printed books with their marketability as she recounts an experience with a bookseller: "'Mrs. Woolf,' he said, 'so long as you print things yourself I can guarantee you an immediate sale and high prices; but when you have books printed for you, it's a very different matter.' 'But you see, Mr. Bain,' I said, 'my taste is very bad.' 'It's not a question of taste, Madam,' he replied; 'It's the personal touch.'"⁵ According to Mr. Bain, Woolf's hand-printed books were valuable because of their auratic qualities rather than their content and perhaps also because of Woolf's own prestige in the literary marketplace of the time (already burgeoning in 1919 and quite impressive by 1923); Bain suggests that it is *her* personal touch, not just the hand-printed appearance of the books.

Printing *The Waste Land* was challenging for the Woolfs—requiring great typographic dexterity in the setting of the lines, the multiple languages, the spacing, the italics of the notes, etc.—and it was a laborious accomplishment (as Woolf’s shaking hands testify) when on September 12, 1923, the Hogarth Press published “460 copies with blue marbled boards probably prepared by Vanessa Bell.”⁶ According to J.H. Willis, “Eliot was delighted with the appearance of the volume when he received his copy. Writing to Virginia, Eliot praised the Woolfs’ setting of his poem, which he thought superior to the Boni and Liveright edition, and recognized that the job must have caused them much trouble” (73). The Hogarth edition sold somewhat sluggishly (not selling out until early 1925). Each copy cost 4/6 and Eliot earned £7.5 on these copies (25 percent of the profits) while the Hogarth Press earned £21.16.6.⁷ Figure 5.1 shows one of version of the Hogarth edition cover—blue marbled boards featuring a hand-pasted label that underlines the book’s title and author. An alternate cover features a label with star-like asterisks surrounding the title and author. This hand-printed production of the Hogarth Press seems to emphasize its hand-crafted quality and indeed with Virginia Woolf herself setting the type and most likely pasting the label and sewing the cover and with Vanessa Bell most likely designing the marbled boards the material form of the Hogarth edition of *The Waste Land* underscores Eliot’s inclusion in and promotion by the Bloomsbury circle.

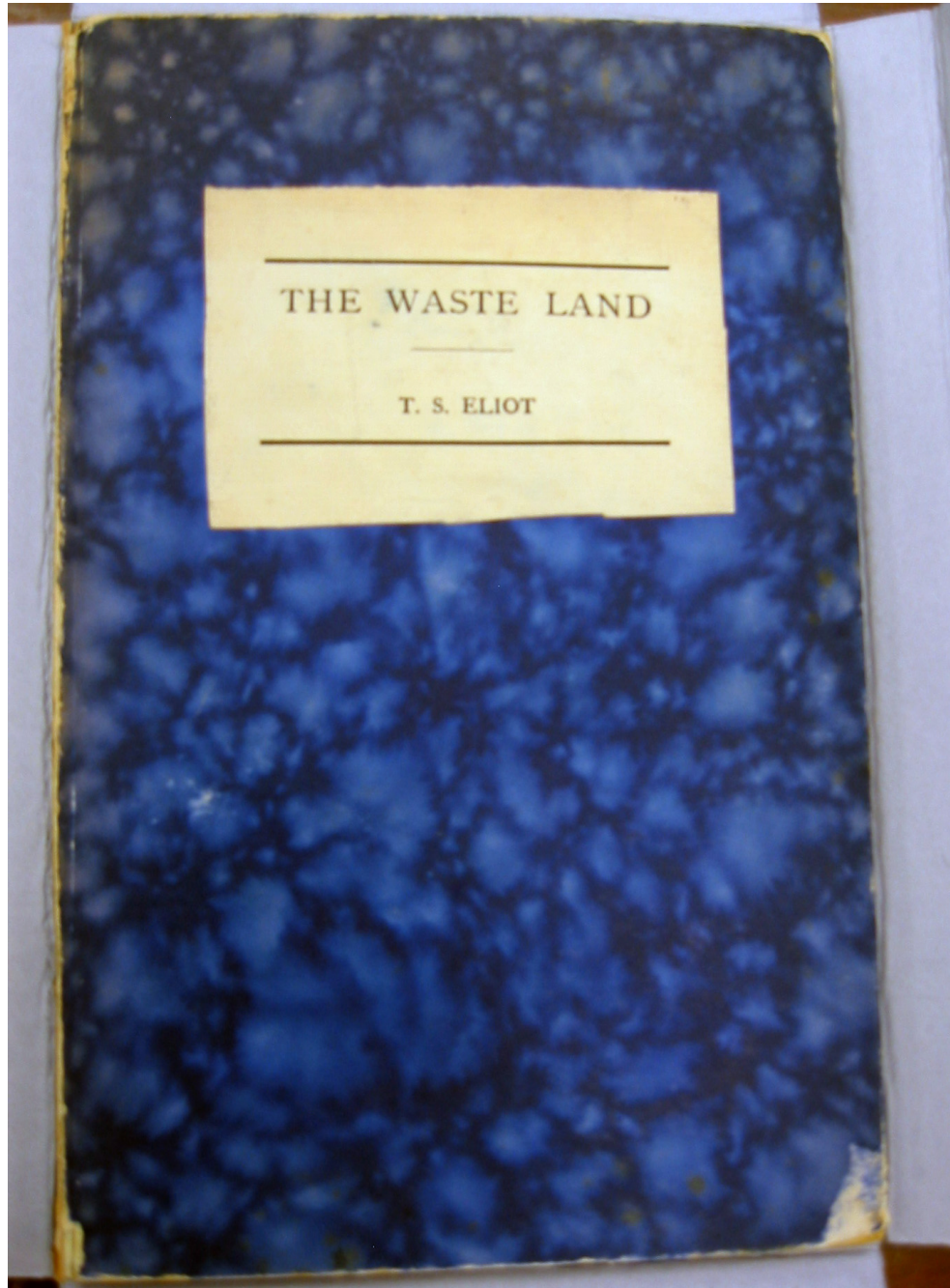


Figure 5.1: Marbled cover of Hogarth edition of Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1923)

Figure 5.2 shows the advertisement for other Hogarth books featured after the final pages of text and also emphasizes Eliot's belonging in the Bloomsbury group of London intelligentsia and in their wider European intellectual sphere. Shortly after the Dial prize helped to secure Eliot's literary reputation, Eliot's inclusion in the company of

E.M. Forster, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, and the Woolfs as well as Dostoevsky and Gorky bolstered his position as an important writer of the times.

PREVIOUS PUBLICATIONS		
LEONID ANDREEV		
The Dark		2s. net.
CLIVE BELL		
Poems		2s. 6d. net.
IVAN BUNIN		
The Gentleman from San Francisco and other stories		4s. net.
F. DOSTOEVSKY		
Stavrogin's Confession, &c.		6s. net.
T. S. ELIOT		
Poems		<i>Out of print.</i>
E. M. FORSTER		
The Story of the Siren		<i>Out of print.</i>
Pharos and Pharillon	Second Edition	3s. net
ROGER FRY		
Twelve Original Woodcuts	Third impression	5s. net.
MAXIM GORKY		
Reminiscences of Tolstoi	Second edition	5s. net.
RUTH MANNING-SANDERS		
Karn A Poem		3s. 6d. net.
KATHERINE MANSFIELD		
Prelude		<i>Out of print.</i>
HOPE MIRRIEES		
Paris A Poem		<i>Out of print.</i>
J. MIDDLETON MURRY		
The Critic in Judgment		2s. 6d. net.
LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH		
Stories from the Old Testament retold		4s. 6d. net.
FREDEGOND SHOVE		
Daybreak		3s. 6d. net.
The Note-books of ANTON TCHEKHOV, together with Reminiscences of TCHEKHOV by Maxim Gorky		5s. net.
The Autobiography of Countess TOLSTOI		4s. net.
LEONARD WOOLF		
Stories of the East		3s. net.
VIRGINIA WOOLF		
Monday or Tuesday.		4s. 6d. net.
The Mark on the Wall	Second edition	1s. 6d. net.
Kew Gardens		<i>Out of print.</i>
Jacob's Room	Second impression	7s. 6d. net.
LEONARD & VIRGINIA WOOLF		
Two Stories		<i>Out of print.</i>

Figure 5.2: "Previous Publications" list included in Hogarth's *The Waste Land*

The appearance of the advertisement at the end of the Hogarth edition does more than include Eliot in an elite company, it also shows that the Woolfs thought that his book of poems would sell and would help them market their other offerings.⁸ The material form of the Hogarth edition of *The Waste Land* speaks to the ways in which the Press's reputation and circulation was heavily grounded in the Bloomsbury group and also

suggests the appeal of the handiwork of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell as means to marketing the texts.

The Hogarth edition of Eliot's poem is mainly notable in its physical appearance, in its production by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and in its inclusion within their imprint and within the community that their Press helped to promote. On the other side of the Atlantic, the Boni & Liveright edition was important in that it was the first version of the poem to include and publish Eliot's notes for the text and in its much larger sales and wider circulation of the poem. Ezra Pound—already a Boni & Liveright author—encouraged Horace Liveright to publish Eliot's poem and Horace eagerly agreed although he was concerned about the short length of the poem for a book publication in the American marketplace. As Tom Dardis, Liveright's biographer, recounts, Liveright wrote to Pound asking for more pages: "At the beginning of the year, while still in London, Horace had written to Pound a letter that contained the plaintive line "I'm disappointed that Eliot's material is as short. *Can't he add anything?*" (emphasis added). As Horace saw it, no matter how large the typeface, 450 lines of verse make a very tiny book. After sorting through a number of possibilities with Pound, Eliot prepared the now famous (or infamous) twelve pages of supremely erudite prose "notes" that followed the poem in Horace's edition—and have done so in all later editions."⁹ Alongside salacious best sellers like Maxwell Bodenheim's *Replenishing Jessica* (1922), Boni & Liveright published many of the first works of emerging modernist figures and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* was one of their first productions to increase their reputation as a publisher of fine literature (indeed Jean Toomer would later cite the firm's publishing of Eliot to express his impression of the quality of the list).¹⁰ Appearing very shortly after the

poem's circulation in *The Criterion* and *The Dial*, the Boni & Liveright edition came out amidst the flurry of reviews that the poem was generating and Liveright attempted to capitalize on Eliot's burgeoning literary reputation describing Eliot in the catalogue announcement of the book as "a man to be reckoned with, now, and hereafter, among the few unique talents of the times."¹¹ As Gilmer recounts, the critical and high brow interest in Eliot's text did not translate into huge sales (although the Boni & Liveright edition managed to hugely outsell the small Hogarth edition): "Despite [...] critical attention, the public bought only about twenty-six hundred copies of the poem during the next eight years. Once more, this was a respectable sale, but it certainly turned no significant profit for Liveright. Priced at \$1.50, the book finally brought in a little over \$100 in excess of its costs. The publisher's revenue could have been substantially increased had he not been so eager to promote the poet; he had gone all out and spent 25 cents per copy for advertising instead of holding with a more realistic budget of 12 to 15 cents a book. This was foolhardy extravagance in the case of a relatively unknown poet like Eliot."¹² The Boni & Liveright production of Eliot's poem speaks to the publishing house's interest in promoting young talent and their willingness to spend a large amount of money on advertising to market their authors and themselves as purveyors of high culture and "good books" as well as publishers of more popular and sensational fare.

Risky Business: Boni & Liveright Publish Modernism

When opening the cover of Djuna Barnes's first Boni & Liveright volume, the reader is greeted with a somewhat startling, almost blank initial title page with the capitalized words "A Book" centered in the midst of a snowy expanse of blankness. This

title suggests a definitional weight—here the phrase “A Book” functions as a sort of ontological claim about what it means to be “A Book,” challenging the reader’s preconceptions of what *A Book* might be, should be, and usually is. While the reader may be jarred by this initial encounter to question what makes *A Book* a book, the next series of pages add to the surprise and to the questioning of what the “Book” genre might be. Witness the second title page and its facing image.

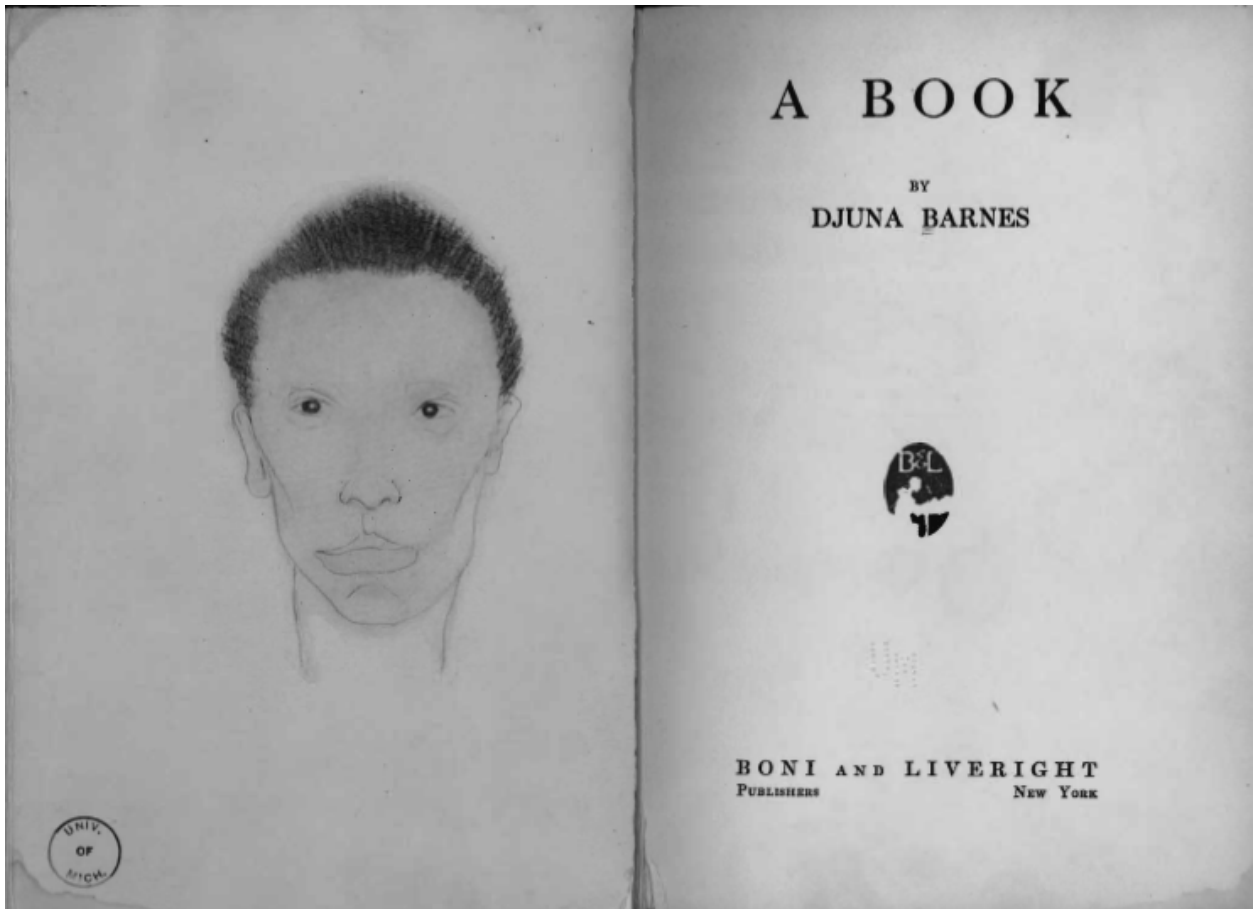


Figure 5.3: Frontispiece and title page for Djuna Barnes’s *A Book* (1923)

While the drawing of a head occupies the space often taken up by a “Frontispiece” (indeed that is the term that the list of Illustrations later applies to this image), this image does not follow most of the conventions of frontispieces. The blank anonymity of this face—its ambiguous race and gender, its lack of an illuminating or identifying caption—

almost make the “Study” (as it is later named) stand in for a portrait of the concept of *A Book* itself. The gaze from the face is almost as unusual as its ambiguity and anonymity—at first glance the eyes seem to challenge the viewer with a head-on stare, but upon longer inspection the eyes actually glance a little bit off to the left-hand side of the page. The face refuses to make eye-contact with the viewer and instead seems to stare a little over one’s left hand shoulder. Traditionally frontispieces in biographies picture the subject of the life-study and in novels they often image the author or illustrate a scene or major character or place from the work of fiction, offering the reader a sense of what is to come or a visual correlative to the text or life to be developed inside the covers.¹³ This frontispiece seems to challenge all of these readerly expectations and to destabilize and disorient the reader’s ideas of just what kind of “Book” *A Book* might be—the frontispiece here seems to push upon the boundaries of what could count as a book by unmooring and extending the possibilities for traditional bibliographic features of a book volume like the frontispiece.

Although the second title page facing the image does provide the additional information of author and publisher, for readers unfamiliar with the work of Djuna Barnes (as almost all readers who would have read *A Book* would have been in 1923 as it was her first widely circulated book volume¹⁴) these details would not provide any substantial clues as to what to expect from *A Book*. The opening pages question the generic conventions governing what *A Book*’s bindings will contain and also emphasize the anonymity of Barnes in some ways, with no introductory foreword by a more established author and not even a mention of the O’Henry Prize that the volume’s opening story “A Night Among the Horses” had won in 1918. In contrast, in 1923, the

same year that he published “A Book,” Liveright framed the work of the equally unknown Jean Toomer with a celebratory introduction by Waldo Frank to promote *Cane* and Harcourt Brace later famously leaned on the laurels of T.S. Eliot to attempt to sell Barnes’s own *Nightwood* (1937). Thus the bareness and anonymity of the bibliographic code of *A Book* seems purposeful—it functions to challenge the reader about their own expectations about what a book is or should be rather than comforting them by adhering to traditional codes surrounding frontispieces and literary authority.

Despite the lack of overt advertising inside the covers of their edition of *A Book*, Boni & Liveright did promote the avant-garde text through multiple notices and advertisements in the periodicals. An announcement of new books in *Publisher’s Weekly* somewhat enigmatically describes *A Book* as a collection of “Plays, stories, poems and drawings by a woman who acknowledges the charm of unnecessary evil.”¹⁵ Additionally, a Boni & Liveright advertisement in *The New York Times Book Review* features a portrait of Barnes and reads: “Illustrated with remarkable drawings from her own brush, this book of stories, plays and poems is a complete representation of the work of one of the most intriguing personalities in modern American letters—truly “a woman of infinite variety.” (See Figure 5.4).

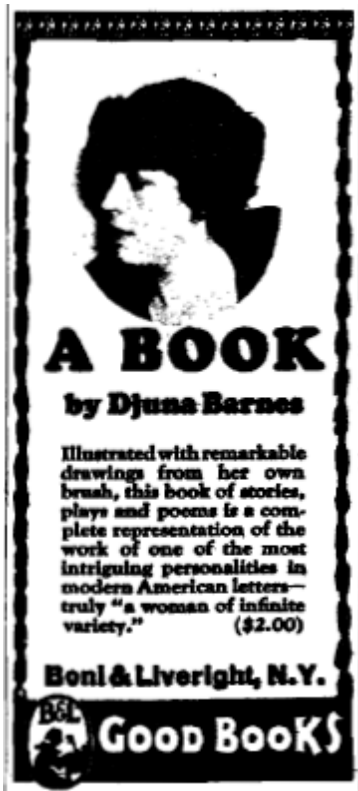


Figure 5.4: *The New York Times Book Review* October 14, 1923

In an advertisement in *Broom*, Boni and Liveright again include the image of Barnes in profile and proclaim: “That almost mythical personality that has loomed so largely and intangibly over modern art in America –Djuna Barnes – has here made itself manifest in a book as individual as its creator.”¹⁶ While these items attempt to market the book through sketching Djuna Barnes herself as an eccentric and “intriguing” woman and as an intangibly looming literary figure, they cannot quite mask that in 1923 Barnes was a little-known figure with no widely circulated book volumes to her name. These ads tend to leverage the “infinite variety” of the woman to stand in for and to sell the “infinite variety” of *A Book* and they do not fully conceal that the contents of *A Book* are difficult to classify and perhaps even more difficult to effectively pitch to prospective readers and buyers. While many of the Boni & Liveright ads emphasize plot and tell readers who

they will “meet” in the pages of the books, the advertisements for *A Book* read more like a list of the different kinds of content that fill the covers without offering any real detail or tantalizing hooks. Compare the list of elements of *A Book* to the blurb in the ad for “The Girl in the Fog” which promises that the book “is full of villains, and the king of them all, misshapen, with gorilla arms, puny legs, a catlike walk, unable to sleep unless he can hang monkey-like from cross beams, is one of the most infamous scoundrels that this reviewer has met” (See Figure 5.5 below).¹⁷

ADVERTISEMENT.

ADVERTISEMENT.



The fingerprint identifies the individual

The B & L imprint identifies good books



Theodore Dreiser's THE GENIUS

This celebrated novel has just been reprinted unabridged from the original plates. It is the story of an artist and his love life. Considered by many critics to be Mr. Dreiser's most important work. (All of his novels and plays now have the B & L imprint.) (\$3.00)



Waldo Frank's HOLIDAY

Waldo Frank's HOLIDAY is one single day of Southern drama. "No outline of the story can do justice to its dramatic qualities—its literary excellence—its gigantic systole and diastole in sympathy with human heartbeats. It is indeed of wonderful workmanship." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat.* (\$2.00)



Ernita Lascelles' THE SECRETICAL COAT

Is a brilliantly witty novel written around the character of one Moreby. The dialogue will suggest Shaw to so many "Times" readers that we beg you not to ask if Moreby is the great G.B.S. Perhaps he is. Perhaps he is not. "Miss Lascelles has achieved a first novel of extraordinary interest and importance." (*P. A. Kinsley in Philadelphia Record.*) (\$2.00)



Ben Hecht's THE FLORENTINE DAGGER

A mystery tale where with shivering joy you will meet a nervous cavalier, and Floria—the lady of the dagger. "Behind the sensational happenings there is real tragedy. And the two things are connected in a manner so ingenious that the reader who suspects the real murderer will gasp when he learns how it was actually committed." *Chicago Eve. Post.* (\$2.00)



Jean Toomer's CANE

Presents emotional, dramatic pictures (in Washington and Georgia) of negro life whose beat, like the primitive tom toms of the African jungle, you can feel because it is written by a man who has felt it historically, poetically and with deepest understanding. "It is a new and dramatic interpretation of negro life." (\$2.00)



W. P. Lawson's LEM ALLEN

A wild west tale that does not insult the intelligence. Plenty of straight two-handed shootings, cowboys, bandits, and old-time gambling episodes, to say nothing of a lovely girl AND LEM ALLEN HIMSELF. *A good man to meet in a book—a good man to meet anywhere.* (\$2.00)



Hendrik Van Loon's THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

Undoubtedly the most important publishing event of 1923 is this new work by the author of *The Story of Mankind.*

To be published October 10th. (\$5.00)

THE MODERN LIBRARY OF THE WORLD'S BEST MODERN CLASSICS

A forty page book with thumbnail portraits describing the authors and over 100 titles of this most famous of all libraries will be sent you on request. Modern Library volumes are obtainable at all bookstores at 95¢ per volume, each book bound in limp, flexible style, stamped and decorated with gold. When writing for this fascinating book about books ask for our other monographs.

BLACK OXEN has been the best selling novel in America since its publication in January. **FLAMING YOUTH** has consistently climbed higher and higher on the best seller list during this same period.



THE NUPTIAL FLIGHT by Edgar Leo Masters

Is an epic panorama of American life seen through three generations. An amazing study of woman in her role of the human Queen Bee. Another gallery of Americans as unforgettable as in *Spoon River*. The Philadelphia Record says, "THE NUPTIAL FLIGHT is easily the best American novel of the year." (\$2.50)



DON JUAN by Ludwig Lewisohn

The tremendous audience which enjoyed *Up Stream* and which has awaited a novel from its author will find their expectations more than realized in *DON JUAN*. Here is a *DON JUAN* of 1923, free to adventure widely but bound by the convention of marriage. The book presents more than the problem of a mismatched couple, for this Don Juan places the honor of his own heart upon an even higher pedestal than that traditionally occupied by woman. (Publication date October 24th.) (\$2.50)



HIDDEN LIVES by Leonora Eyles

In *Hidden Lives* you meet a fanatical curate, and a modern young woman doctor. They fall in love. Helen gives herself to him less in emotion than to cure him of his delusions and repressions. "As realistic, dramatic fiction it is tremendously effective. Helen is a new figure in fiction, the first fully grown up specimen of the really new woman." (*N. Y. Herald.*) (\$2.50)



AFTER ALL by George F. Hummel

This novel of a progressive married life will focus your attention on Gus Brenner's honest account of himself, an unweaving so fine and explicit that you will close the book at the end with a clarification of ideas and ideals. "It is a pitiless analysis of marriage—a much better novel than for example Norris's 'Brass.'" *N. Y. Herald.* (8th edition—\$2.00)



THE GIRL IN THE FOG by Joseph Gollomb

The first of the Red and Green Mystery Detective Series. "The book is full of villains, and the king of them all, misshapen, with gorilla arms, puny legs, a catlike walk, unable to sleep unless he can hang monkey-like from cross beams, is one of the most infamous scoundrels this reviewer has met. It is a mystery story not only unlike others, but better than others." *N.Y. Times.* (\$2.00)



STORIES OF THE FIRST AMERICAN ANIMALS by George Langford

"The American Jungle Book." A collection of tales of the American jungle that existed ages ago, and the strange animals that lived in it. Children and grown-ups will thrill over these strange animal characters and their stories. Illustrated with five 4 color pages by Ty Mahon and 37 black and white drawings by the author. (\$3.00)



HAUNCH, PAUNCH AND JOWL An Autobiography

The story of an immigrant boy who rose from gangster to judge of a high court. In the interim he was waiter, police court runner, lover, shyster lawyer, and strikebreaker. The author is unsparing of himself, and his people. He brings home to everyone what may be the bitterest of all tragedies—the tragedy of success. (\$3.00)

B & L MONOGRAPHS

1. New Fall Catalog of all B & L Books.
2. *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (Doughty). "The greatest travel book of any time." *London Mercury.*
3. *The Story of the Bible* (Van Loon).
4. *These United States.*
5. *The Carra Edition of George Moore's works.* (Yours for the asking.)

BONI & LIVERIGHT GOOD BOOKS 61 WEST 48th ST. NEW YORK

Figure 5.5: Full page advertisement from *The New York Times Book Review*, Oct 7th, 1923

A more enticingly specific description—like the one offered for “The Girl in the Fog”—would be difficult as the multi-generic pieces of *A Book* are not really unified by content, theme, or style—perhaps the predominant fact that unites them is their placement within the covers of *A Book*. *A Book* lays bare the material form of *the book* and calls for the reader’s interest through its frontispiece with its strange alien gaze and its experimental questioning of genre—it combines short plays, short stories, five drawings and interspersed poems. While the short stories and plays do contain many affairs, murders, and dramatic deaths, these potentially salacious events are often left ambiguous or take place off stage and are not rendered through climatic revelatory moments. Barnes’s text treats these activities as mundane elements of modern alienation and emphasizes the unremarkableness of these tragedies rather than their shocking singularity. The poems are even more various in their forms, tones, and themes. While the poems (much more than the plays or the stories) repeatedly invoke and reflect upon pastoral themes, *A Book* splits its evocations of the pastoral into wildly different effects and affects—certain poems offer nostalgic pastoral visions replete with slumbering moles while others give darker pastoral scenes filled with moods of human alienation, scrambling rats, and flowering corpses.

Despite the *Publisher’s Weekly* notice, the contents of *A Book* do not uniformly glorify “the charm of unnecessary evil,” and instead seem to offer a more Janus-faced vision of different kinds of evils just as the “illustrations” all glance in different directions, refusing to function in a clearly uniform way as images of figures from the stories or poems they face. While the volume refuses coherence as to theme or form, the final poem, titled “Finis,” obliquely reflects upon *A Book*’s status as a book and seems to

interrogate its relationship to endings and to readers. The short concluding poem begins by questioning who the “Finis” refers to: “For you, or for me? Why then the striking hour, / The wind among the curtains, and the tread / Of some late gardener pulling at the flower / They’ll lay between our hearts when we are dead.”¹⁸ This final poetic gesture questions what the end of *A Book* might mean for “you, or for me” and connects the closing of a book with an ending clock chime, a curtain, and a projected vision of death. While the poem opens up many interpretive possibilities, its position as the final piece of the volume and its title do point to the poem’s interest in and engagement with the material form of a book and the conventions of book endings just as the frontispiece played with beginnings. Here Barnes’s poem takes up what is usually the last word and closing gesture of a text and instead of leaving it at that, it converts “Finis” into an opportunity to question endings and to challenge the possible meanings and finality of a “Finis” by refusing to let it rest as the last word of the volume.

Despite Djuna Barnes’s as yet unproven talent and doubtful sales, Boni & Liveright offered her quite a bit of freedom in the contract for the publication of *A Book*. The terms of this contract are laid out in a letter from Horace Liveright to Barnes: “Confirming our conversation of yesterday, this will advise you that we w[a]nt to publish in the fall of this year a book by you which I should say, offhand, should not be less than 160 pages of poems, stories, sketches, etc. to be illustrated by you in black and white, the format of the book to be agreed upon by mutual consent. The question of the illustrations is to be thoroughly discussed by us in that the word illustrations may be interpreted by you as decorations if you see fit to do so.”¹⁹ The language of the contract implies that the construction of just what *A Book* would contain would be “agreed upon by mutual

consent” and that the work was a collaborative production that combined their ideas of what *A Book* should be (i.e. at least 160 pages and containing all of the different genres listed) and even stipulating that the “illustrations” were open to debate and would be “thoroughly discussed” between the two parties.

I began with the publication history and material form of *A Book* because I am interested in the collaborative negotiations involved in Boni & Liveright productions and in the firm’s willingness to risk money publishing the work of lesser known authors even when that work was highly experimental and seemed unlikely to make huge profits. Several scholars have acknowledged Boni & Liveright’s publication of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and have documented the firm’s insistence that the book take up more pages, leading to Eliot’s addition of his Notes.²⁰ Yet the impact of Boni & Liveright on the publishing of modernism extends far beyond that poem: the press’s publication roster reads like a Who’s Who of Modernism—they published (and often introduced to the public) Djuna Barnes, Jean Toomer, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, E.E. Cummings, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Eugene O’Neill. And indeed the cultural influence of the publishing house extends beyond modernism which made up only a small part of their eclectic list: experimental texts by these figures that have since become staples of the modernist canon appeared in catalogues alongside best-sellers like Gertrude Atherton’s *Black Oxen*, Maxwell Bodenheim’s *Replenishing Jessica*, and Anita Loos’s *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.²¹ And even beyond the books they printed, Boni & Liveright altered publishing as an industry as they pioneered innovative practices in the ways in which they marketed and advertised their books.

The press began as a joint venture between Horace Liveright (who provided the financing) and Albert Boni (who provided his idea for the Modern Library series) when the two men fortuitously came together while both employed at an advertising agency.²² Liveright was coming off a failure attempting to manufacture toilet paper which he had called Pick-Quick Paper as an homage to Dickens.²³ Boni had recently sold his Washington Square Book Store and his recent success with the Little Leather Library—pocket-sized books of reprinted classics that had begun with a 25 cent copy of *Romeo & Juliet* that was sent out in boxes of Whitman’s chocolates—had encouraged him to attempt the Modern Library series.²⁴ The Boni & Liveright Publishing firm was officially established in 1917 and they began by producing twelve titles in the Modern Library Series—reprints of European classics—selling them for 60 cents each.²⁵ The dust jacket from the ninth volume of the series, Nietzsche’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra* proclaims “People Are Judged By The Books They Read.”²⁶ The back cover blurb reads: “It is the purpose of the publishers to issue in the “Modern Library” books that have already won for themselves a position as classics [...] The “Modern Library” appeals to people who consider good books a necessity, not a luxury.”²⁷ These statements seem to assure the purchaser of their investment in a secure method of acquiring cultural capital and the Modern Library series was an almost overnight success with profits from the series enabling the house of Boni & Liveright to begin publishing new work outside of the series even in its first year of operation. Thus, just after their founding, Boni & Liveright emerged as a firm committed to printing “good books” and willing and able to take risks on young unknown authors—their risky business being initially in large part funded by the successful Modern Library series.

Despite their initial successes, the partners disagreed on the direction of the firm—Liveright wanted to focus more on American authors and unknowns while Boni favored the novels and socio-political works of Continental writers.²⁸ Walker Gilmer has reported that the future of the firm hung on a coin toss: “Liveright won the toss, and in July 1918 he became the majority owner of the firm.”²⁹ After Boni’s departure, Liveright hired Edward Bernays in 1919 to develop the marketing side of the Press. In order to compel the attention of potential buyers and to make their books newsworthy, Boni & Liveright innovated with their advertising methods. Gilmer explains the multiple ways in which Boni & Liveright with the help of young Edward Bernays pioneered practices that were then quickly copied by other publishers: “Boni & Liveright offered newspaper editors across the country free books and about one hundred newsworthy articles on the firm’s books and authors. Soon feature stories based on these releases began appearing everywhere, and, thanks to increased exposure to the public, Liveright’s books began to sell better than ever. Other publishers quickly copied the methods the house had initiated.”³⁰ In essence, Boni & Liveright sent out press-releases for their books that newspapers could just copy and print either selectively or in full as though they were reviews. This practice, while claimed as new by Liveright’s biographers, is part of a longer history of marketing books that extends back into the nineteenth-century and Boni & Liveright leveraged this established method to promote their texts as widely and aggressively as they could afford.³¹ I found, when looking at the reviews for Jean Toomer’s *Cane*, that newspapers all over the country were quoting the same few sentences in “reviews” that the firm had scripted for their use.

In the case of *Cane*, the oft-sited and circulated “script” for the reception of the book is taken from the description of the text laid out in the inner flaps of the Boni & Liveright dust jacket for the volume. This description, which seems to have been the same text circulated to newspapers as a press release for the new work, interestingly foregrounds the difficulty of describing what sort of book *Cane* is. The strange development of the prose blurb on the book’s dust jacket illustrates Boni & Liveright’s struggle to find the right pitch for *Cane*. The jacket reads: “This book is a vaudeville out of the South. Its acts are sketches, short stories, one long drama and a few poems [...] There can be no cumulative and consistent movement and, of course, no central plot to such a book. But if it be accepted as a unit of spiritual experience, then one can find in *Cane* a beginning, a progression, a complication, and an end. It is too complex a volume to find its parallel in the Negro musical comedies so popular on Broadway. *Cane* is black vaudeville. It is black super-vaudeville out of the South.”³² The description begins with the definitional assertion that “This book is a vaudeville out of the South” and then linking the concept of vaudeville to the separate kinds of contents that the book includes—the middle part of the jacket description continues the analogy by referring to the “acts” and by imagining Part One as “The curtain ris[ing].” Yet the conclusion of the jacket seems to step away from this certainty and instead to qualify the initial definition by clarifying that *Cane* is too complex to find its parallel in the popular Broadway versions of vaudeville, and instead must be understood as something more specific than that. Rhetorically, through the progression of the jacket, *Cane* has become less easily definable and yet also more specifically delineated—it is not simply “a vaudeville out of the south” it is instead “black super-vaudeville out of the South.” The deletion of the “a”

in the final phrase signals that *Cane* is unique and in some ways not assimilable to an umbrella-like generic category—*Cane* is not “a” vaudeville. Michael North has remarked upon the aptness of the jacket’s phrase, even as its openness led to some misunderstanding, as a description for Toomer’s method in *Cane*: “For vaudeville is “out of the South” in that its sources are largely rural and black, but it is also “out of the South” in that these forms have been transplanted into an urban setting and subjected to violent stretching and scrambling. Vaudeville is also highly formulaic, dependent on an almost ritualistic repetition of acts and situations, but it is also largely improvisatory, as the performers interact differently with different audiences on different nights.”³³ I agree with North’s reading of the useful doubling of the phrase and its interesting links not just to race, but also to *Cane*’s formal method.

I am interested in the malleability of Boni & Liveright’s construction of Toomer as author and of *Cane* as text. While the advertising campaign and jacket framing of *Cane* has often been read as a deeply problematic pinning of the label “Negro” to Toomer in order to sell books and capitalize on his racial identity and “authenticity,” I argue that the complex progression of the jacket description and the varying strategies used in different ads for different markets shows the press’s continual negotiation of the complexity of the multiple appeals of Toomer’s book.³⁴ While the ad in the *New York Times Review of Books* does “Feature Negro” as Toomer famously permitted Boni & Liveright to do (while refusing to feature negro for them in an autobiographical sketch), an advertisement run in *Broom* takes a completely different tack emphasizing the work’s unusual style and links to high modernist circles: “You have seen parts of this unusual book in BROOM and other portions probably in “The Little Review” and other

unfashionable magazines. The book is really a stirring event in the year's literature."³⁵ Here the ad markets Toomer's modernist difficulty and leverages his reputation in highbrow, "unfashionable" periodicals and does not mention his race at all. While I do not wish to suggest that Boni & Liveright's uses of Toomer's race are unproblematic, I would like to add that the Press's treatment of the text was more complicated and more interested in promoting the complexity of *Cane*'s content and form than has usually been considered. As a visual depiction of their multiple framings of the text, I offer the contrasting images offered by the dust jacket and then the actual printed cover binding that lay underneath the jacket (Figures 5.6 and 5.7).

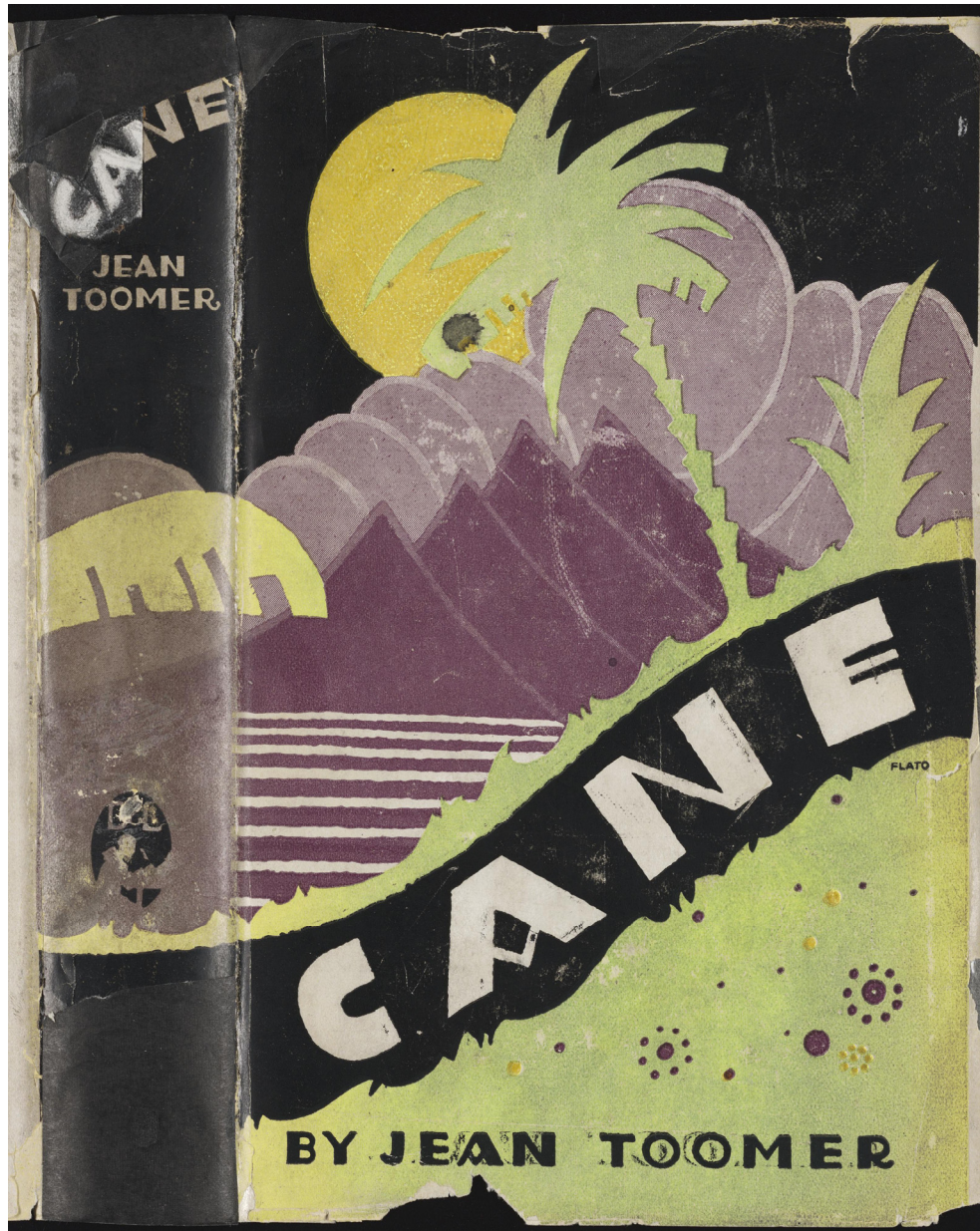


Figure 5.6: Front cover of dust-jacket for the Boni & Liveright edition of *Cane*

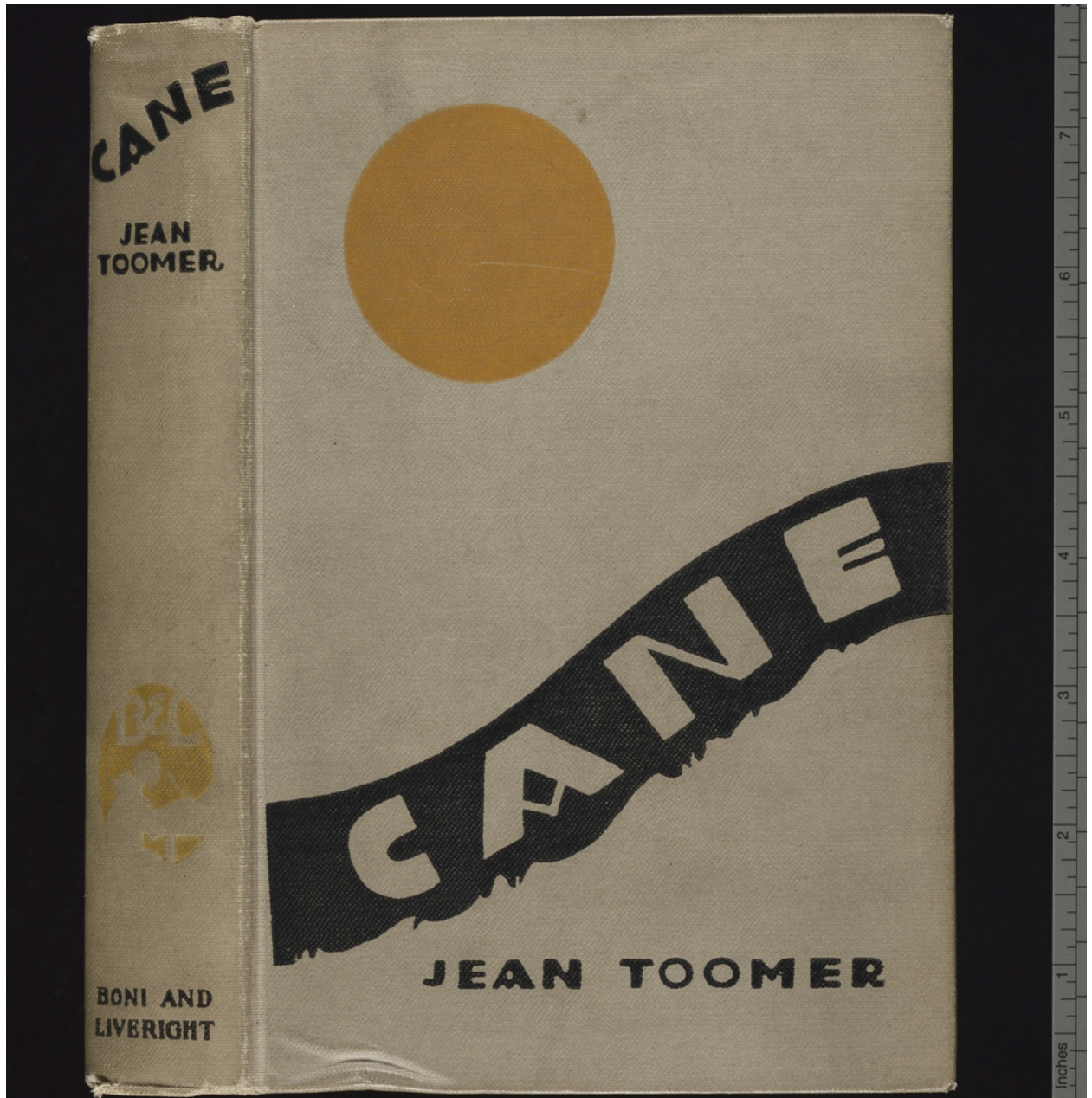


Figure 5.7: Cloth front cover of the Boni & Liveright edition of *Cane*

The opulent purples, greens and golds and the outlined palm tree suggest an ambiguously racialized landscape corresponding to one type of advertisement's comparison of the book's "rhythmic beat" to "the primitive tom-toms of the African jungle."³⁶ In contrast, and yet ever present underneath this ornate art deco jacket, the book's cover design reveals a stripped down vision, all of the gaudy riot of the jacket pared down to the

minimalist elements of sun and title. Absent the details even the sun and the shaping of the title's borders become abstracted from their functions on the jacket, distanced from any racialized suggestion, and instead signifying an interest in something like pure form.

By balancing multiple markets—the high brow journals catering to the literary intelligentsia and the more popular forums to appeal to book sellers looking to sell large amounts of stock like *Publisher's Weekly* and *The New York Review of Books*—and by altering their advertising strategies accordingly as they did in the case of *Cane*, Boni & Liveright were able to publish many of experimental works of high modernism and sustain a reputation for literary merit and “good books” while also profiting from more salable sensational and popular fare. The Boni & Liveright Publishing firm was able to support many unknown writers and their formally risky books in large part because of their innovative approaches to advertising, their income from their successful Modern Library series, and their publication of sensational best-sellers to counterbalance the less salable high modernist works. Much of this riskiness was enabled through the idiosyncratic leadership of Horace Liveright and also enabled by Boni & Liveright's lack of more secure traditional vehicles for earning money, without which they were ideally positioned to experiment with their practices and their offerings.³⁷ As a young firm, not entrenched in older methods or conservative approaches, and as a less established firm run by Jewish entrepreneurs, Boni & Liveright was in a position to be open to formal innovation and to politically and sexually controversial books. The innovations of Boni & Liveright were in part enabled by their outsider status and by their clever filling of a niche within the American publishing industry—a niche left open by the old-line firms largely located in Boston. Unlike these more traditional firms, firms run by young Jewish

publishers (including figures like Knopf and Huebsch as well as the Boni brothers and Horace Liveright) had nothing to lose by promoting new authors as they had neither contacts nor contracts with established writers.³⁸

In addition to taking risks by publishing promising unknown authors, Boni & Liveright also changed the field of publishing through their innovations in marketing and advertising their books. Tom Dardis remarks upon the revolutionary impact of the Press's promotional style in his biography of Horace Liveright: "U.S. book publishing was never the same after Horace Liveright's arrival. He was largely responsible for the idea, now commonplace, that books constituted news and should be treated accordingly, a practice quite contrary to that prevailing among his competitors, who ran their firms like conservative banking houses. With his gaudy showmanship and genius for publicity, Liveright created new and hitherto unknown audiences for books."³⁹ Walker Gilmer explains the changes that Horace Liveright in particular wrought upon publishing as a career: "Liveright made startling changes in a profession that had once offered a genteel career to gentlemen who could not write themselves. He was an upstart who—through promotion, advertising, and publicity—compelled the same attention for his books that Hearst had compelled for his newspapers."⁴⁰ Boni & Liveright, under Horace's leadership, redefined the field of book publishing and particularly publicity spending more and using more visually and verbally innovative approaches than his competitors. In one instance, Boni & Liveright promoted Hutchins Hapgood's anonymously issued *The Story of a Lover* by featuring "definitions of love" culled "from American movie queens and to use these comments in advertising the novel. His success was immediate and the sales of *The Story of a Lover* climbed rapidly thanks to the newspaper ads touting

it under the romantic effusions of Mary Pickford, the Gish sisters, or their press agents.”⁴¹

Waldo Frank described the unorthodox practices of Horace Liveright (referred to as HBL) in his sketch “One Hundred Per Cent American”:

When the book is ready, the trader is doubled by a circus barker. HBL can sponsor a book like a lover of Truth, and sell it like a patent medicine hawker. He has done more to put “life” into the literary market than any of his fellows. And...more’s the pity...he is proud of it. For this “life” consists chiefly of undifferentiated adjectives of praise, lacking even the circus merit of alliteration. Of course, in this, Liveright is a child of the times. The complexity of reaching the scattered literate thousands, hidden in our hundred millions, is exasperating enough to make any one raise his voice. The trouble is that straightaway the other publishers raised their voices too. So that the “Book Page” has become a Bedlam—as noisy as the old Curb with which HBL used to be familiar. Even Paris is beginning to imitate the cacophonous ways of Liveright. He knows its bad: but he enjoys the racket—precisely because he knows he started it.⁴²

The large Boni & Liveright advertisement from *The New York Review of Books* speaks to this “Bedlam” and suggests the wide variety of texts the Press had on offer in 1923—all placed under the B&L imprint of “good books” (see Figure 5.5). While *Cane* failed to sell more than five hundred copies and Djuna Barnes’s *A Book* sold only 295 copies, these formally experimental and indeed nearly unclassifiable texts are not only changed by their juxtaposition with best-selling texts and more popular genres like the mysteries or wild-west romps under the Boni & Liveright imprint they also elevate the Boni & Liveright brand by adding a strand of formally daring high modernist experimentation.⁴³ As I’ve tried to show, reading *Cane* or *A Book* within the context of their place on the Boni & Liveright list rather than as part of a larger aesthetic movement or as part of an author’s career development allows for different sorts of questions and critical approaches. The version of modernism that emerged through a risky business like Boni & Liveright’s—a modernism conceived through the mixing of high and low and financed

through a successful balancing act that sustained both less profitable literary experimentation and hugely popular best-sellers and that maintained a reputation for literary merit and good sales—contrasts with the version of modernism—caught up in different kinds of balancing acts—that began to emerge from the Woolfs' home and handpress in the Hogarth Press during the same time across the Atlantic.

The Hogarth Press: Selling “Works of Genuine Merit,” or “Justified Faith”

Accounts of the Hogarth Press usually begin with an anecdote that Virginia Woolf recorded in her diary upon the occasion of her thirty-third birthday on January 25, 1915: Woolf wrote “I don’t know when I enjoyed a birthday so much – not since I was a child anyhow. Sitting at tea we decided three things: in the first place to take Hogarth [House, Richmond], if we can get it; in the second, to buy a Printing press; in the third to buy a Bull dog, probably called John. I am very much excited at the idea of all three – particularly the press.”⁴⁴ While the bull dog John did not materialize, the Woolfs did buy the Hogarth House in Richmond and in March of 1917 they bought a handpress. In his excellent history of the Hogarth Press, J. H. Willis remarks that upon purchasing the handpress that “[n]either Virginia nor Leonard could possibly have foreseen [...] that the amusing and exciting pastime they were beginning would so complicate and enrich their lives for the next twenty-five years and more.”⁴⁵ There were a multitude of good reasons to purchase the handpress and to experiment with printing. Laura Marcus cites Leonard’s remarks in his autobiography about his hope that the handpress would function as a form of therapy for Virginia: “it would be a good thing if Virginia had a manual occupation of this kind which, in say the afternoons, would take her mind completely off her work.”⁴⁶

Indeed, the manual labor of operating the press, setting and resetting the type, stitching the covers, etc. was very intensive—with their first small hand-press (set up in the Woolf’s dining room) they could only print one page at a time.⁴⁷

In addition to its therapeutic capacity, the possession of a printing press also gave the Woolfs the intellectual freedom to print what they liked and what might otherwise not be published. Marcus cites Virginia Woolf’s letters to illustrate the Woolfs’ initial intentions to use the Press “to print and publish small books and pamphlets, difficult to place with commercial presses”; Marcus explains that in 1916, “Virginia Woolf wrote to Lady Robert Cecil, ‘We are thinking of starting a printing press, for all our friends stories’” (125).⁴⁸ For Virginia in particular, the possession of a press meant extraordinary freedom and the release from her publishing agreement with her half brother Duckworth. After the publication of their first book—*Two Stories* (1917)—Virginia wrote to David Garnett exclaiming that “one ought to invent a completely new form [...] it is very amusing to try with these short things, and the greatest mercy to be able to do what one likes—no editors, or publishers, and only people to read who more or less like that sort of thing [...] I dont [sic] like writing for my half brother George.”⁴⁹ Woolf emphasizes her sense of empowerment through self-publication in an entry in her diary on Tuesday, 22 September 1925: “How my writing goes downhill! Another sacrifice to the Hogarth Press. Yet what I owe the Hogarth Press is barely paid for by the whole of my handwriting. Haven’t I just written to Herbert Fisher refusing to do a book for the Home University Series on Post Victoria – knowing that I can write a book, a better book, a book off my own bat, for the Press if I wish! To think of being batted down in the hold of those University dons fairly makes my blood run cold. Yet I’m the

only woman in England free to write what I like.”⁵⁰ Many critics have acknowledged that Woolf’s self-proclaimed status as “the only woman in England free to write what [she likes]” may have contributed to her willingness to experiment formally and thematically in her work and to engage with potentially controversial politics and ideas. And indeed, her experiences working with the press may have inspired experimentation even through the influence of setting up type and through her increased exposure to the works of her contemporaries.⁵¹ The Hogarth Press undoubtedly had a profound and transformative influence on the lives and works of Virginia and Leonard Woolf. However, the focus of this chapter is not just on the Press’s impact on the Woolfs, but also on the ways in which the Hogarth Press shaped the material forms of modernism.

The Hogarth Press originated at least in part through the Woolfs desire to get works into print that might not be published elsewhere, including (but not exclusively) the short works of themselves and their Bloomsbury friends. In an early announcement sent out by the Hogarth Press to subscribers, the Woolfs describe the mission of their publishing venture:

Dear Sir, Our object in starting the Hogarth Press has been to publish at low prices short works of merit, in prose or poetry, which could not, because of their merits appeal to a very large public. The whole process of printing and production (except in one instance) is done by ourselves, and the editions are necessarily extremely small, not exceeding 300 copies. We enclose a list of publications with an order form.⁵²

This announcement speaks to the Hogarth mission of trying to make “short works of merit” available at “low prices” and seems to echo the version of modernism which disdains mass publics by saying that “merits” are antithetical to market appeal. The tone of elitism must be read in the context of this document which seems to have been intended mainly to increase the ease of purchase for already existing customers—the rest

of the announcement goes on to detail plans by which readers could arrange to have all or a selection of the Hogarth offerings sent to them and to have the cost debited from a large deposit (to avoid the annoyance of continually sending small sums).⁵³ This context makes legible the announcement's emphasis on the unpopular "merits" and exclusivity ("not exceeding 300 copies") of Hogarth productions—as it was meant to validate and consolidate the Press's existing customer base.

However, despite these emphases on exclusivity, the announcement also signals the Woolfs' desire to make quality literature available at *low prices*. The pricing of books was always something that the Woolfs and particularly Leonard welcomed advice about. This concern over pricing is evident in an August 1918 letter from J.C. Squire (at *The New Statesmen*), early in the development of the Hogarth Press, advising Leonard about charging booksellers: "I believe that on a 3/6 book the bookseller pays 2/11. I suppose therefore that is what you ought to charge. On a 2/6 book, the bookseller is charged 2/1. I don't think I ever congratulated you on your latest production. The whole thing looks very nice."⁵⁴ As this letter suggests, the Woolfs were not fully sure about how to negotiate the pricing of their books and the charging of intermediaries for distributing them. Indeed, even as late as 1929, when they began to plan for bringing out a "Collected Edition of Virginia Woolf"—the project which later became known as "The Uniform Edition"—Leonard was still learning about appropriate pricing. In 1929, the Hogarth Press planned to do a cheaper edition of Virginia's work which they initially wanted to price at 3/6, but Jonathan Cape firmly advised them against such a low price point in his letter to Leonard on April 17, 1929:

I am very glad to hear that you contemplate doing a cheaper Collected Edition of Virginia Woolf. May I as a friendly colleague make the suggestion that you

consider bringing out a five shilling edition instead of a three and sixpenny edition. Our experience with the collected work of Mary Webb at five shillings a volume is very encouraging, and there seems to be no hesitation on the part of the public to pay five shillings. If you publish at three and sixpence you will come into competition with all the other pocket libraries such as The Travellers Library. Every publisher now publishes or has announced a three and sixpenny Series similar to The Travellers Library [...] If you publish Mrs Woolf at three and sixpence in the ordinary Crown Octavo format, you then come in competition with the popular three and sixpenny fiction issued at Hodder, Cassell, Collins, and in fact almost every publisher. Competition in three and sixpenny books pocket size, or ordinary novel size is very keen, and this can be seen in the demand by the booksellers which is making itself manifest for special terms for three and sixpenny books, i.e. a discount over and above a third off.⁵⁵

While Cape's advice was at least partly motivated by his desire not to have competition for his own "Traveller's Library"—the correspondence is in response to his request to print Virginia Woolf's *The Common Reader* as part of his own cheap pocket series—his advice does point out the fierce market for cheaper books, both in terms of reprints of classics and of popular new fiction. In his response to Cape, Leonard rejected an offer to jointly produce a 5 shilling collected edition of Virginia's works with Cape but does acknowledge the helpfulness of the advice on pricing: "I have to thank you very much for your friendly and generous letter, and I need hardly say that my wife and I have carefully considered your proposals. Your offer is very tempting, but we feel that as long as we continue to publish her books under the Hogarth Press imprint, we had better go the whole hog and also do the collected edition. Many thanks however both for the offer and for your advice which is most useful."⁵⁶ And indeed, Leonard did follow the advice and when the Hogarth Press Uniform Edition of Virginia's work was produced it was priced at 5 shillings following Cape's recommendation.

This exchange over the price point of a Hogarth produced series speaks to the difficult position of the Hogarth Press in the wider literary marketplace—while they

wanted to be genuinely affordable to enable their productions to reach a wider number of readers with their literature of “merit,” their books could not successfully compete (at least according to Cape) in the cheaper market. While possibly inflected by his potential bias as a competing producer of books of the lower price-point, Cape’s claim is intuitively persuasive. The Hogarth Press’s viability at a higher-price point with lower circulation seems like a logical practice for a press with limited resources and market-share. Indeed, the specific appeals of the Hogarth imprint and the Woolfs’ reputation seem more geared toward the consumer of the “high-brow” and under these circumstances the higher price point would help to certify the purchase of cultural capital and to ratify belonging to an exclusive group (even with the relatively cheap “Uniform edition” of Woolf’s works). Unlike these “pocket” libraries or cheaper popular novels, the Hogarth Press’s appeals lay—as the bookseller Mr. Bain told Mrs. Woolf—in the “personal touch” of their productions both in terms of the material forms of their texts with their distinctive handcrafted appearances (at least as regards the handprinted ones and also with Vanessa Bell’s unique jackets for her sister’s works) and their ties to a literary and cultural elite (both in terms of their authors and their subscribers).

In 1922, on the “fifth anniversary” of The Hogarth Press, the Woolfs produced a circular advertising their new offerings and including a long note about the success and the aims of their publishing venture. The note begins by stating that since 1917 the Hogarth Press had produced 19 volumes which have all “justif[ied] [...] even in a pecuniary sense, the faith [they] put in [the Press]” and moves to “remind” their subscribers of the “aims” that the Woolfs had in starting the Press:

We aimed in the first place at producing works of genuine merit which, for reasons well known and difficult to gainsay, could scarcely hope to secure

publication through the ordinary channels. In the second place we were resolved to produce no book merely with a view to pecuniary profit. We meant to satisfy ourselves to the best of our ability that the work had literary or artistic merit before we undertook to produce it. Such were our aims, and a glance at our list of publications will, we hope, convince you that we have done our best to live up to them. It is therefore all the more gratifying to be able to say that of these nineteen volumes four are out of print, one has gone into a third edition, three are in their second editions, and our first publication “Two Stories” by Leonard and Virginia Woolf, originally published at one shilling and sixpence, now fetches twenty five shillings in the second hand bookshops. Of the remaining volumes (save those most lately published) very small stocks are now in print—of four volumes, indeed, twenty copies or less alone remain.⁵⁷

This 5th year anniversary announcement expresses the Woolfs’ pride in their achievements with their Hogarth Press and especially in their ability to sell books effectively. The note’s applauding of the rising value for “Two Stories” and of the books that have sold out or are only available in “very small stocks” emphasizes that the Press did effectively compete in the book trade. Indeed, the Hogarth Press’s unexpected early success formed the occasion for the note: in addition to celebrating the Press’s fifth year anniversary, the note serves to announce expansions in the Hogarth staff and the planned shift from mostly handprinted books toward outsourcing many of their productions to professional printers.⁵⁸

The announcement goes on to express the Hogarth Press’s “intention to proceed more boldly in the future, and to publish a greater number of books and books of great length” while reassuring their audience that they will maintain the original aims of the Press in spite of their planned expansion: “But we do not mean to depart in any other respect from the principles which guided us in the beginning. We shall continue to give particular attention to the work of young and unknown writers. We shall proceed with our translations from the Russian. We intended to issue reproductions from the works of living painters.”⁵⁹ Here, the Press reasserts its goals to print works otherwise not

available to readers—with their productions of the Russian translations and the young unknown writers—and their continued project of promoting works of living visual artists. And yet, interestingly, in the same paragraph of the note, the Press claims that it will not attempt to overly “embellish” their books: “On the other hand, it is none of our purpose to reprint the classics; nor shall we sacrifice time or money to embellish our books beyond what is necessary for ease of reading and decency of appearance. We shall continue to print the smaller editions with our own hands—for the larger editions we shall employ the services of the usual printing presses. Our experience in the past confirms us in our belief that it is essential to keep our prices at the ordinary level, and to aim rather at cheapness and adequacy than at high prices and typographical splendour.”⁶⁰ Again, the Press seems eager to advertise their commitment to “cheapness” and their intentions not to produce high-priced deluxe embellished editions. This announcement reflects the at times conflicted intentions of the Hogarth Press by advertising their dual emphases on keeping prices low to make good work available to many readers and their pride in making books that sell out and that appreciate in value (the self-lauding aside about the increased value of *Two Stories*).⁶¹

The often conflicting motives of the Press are reflected even in their first offering, *Two Stories*, in whose increased value at the second-hand shops the notice took such pride. I agree with Donna Rhein’s assessment that *Two Stories* “should be seen as a product of two enthusiastic amateur printers who had mastered the rudiments of printing and binding with remarkable speed.”⁶² Rhein cites a letter from Virginia to Vanessa Bell dated May 22, 1917 expressing her enthusiasm for their first production: “We have just started printing Leonard’s story; I haven’t produced mine yet, but there’s nothing in

writing compared with printing [...] we've got about 60 orders already which shows a trusting spirit.”⁶³ As this letter indicates, *Two Stories* was already being printed before Virginia had even written her half of the collaboration. The letter also indicates Woolf's enthusiasm for printing and her eagerness for the success of the Press to get orders for its productions. The title page for the volume (see Figure 5.8 below) also indicates the Woolfs' excitement about and gratification in their new venture as it proudly announces that this book is “Publication NO. 1” and that the book is “Written and Printed by Virginia Woolf and L.S. Woolf.”

PUBLICATION NO. I.

TWO STORIES

WRITTEN AND PRINTED
BY
VIRGINIA WOOLF
AND
L. S. WOOLF

HOGARTH PRESS
RICHMOND

1917

Figure 5.8: Title page of *Two Stories*

To publicize their first production the Woolfs sent out a notice announcing their “pamphlet containing two short stories by Leonard Woolf and Virginia Woolf.”⁶⁴ They mailed this notice to their friends and they probably also circulated the notice to a list of the Omega Workshop supporters as Virginia had asked Roger Fry for a list in a letter the

previous year.⁶⁵ As J.H. Willis documents, the production of this first publication was not an easy undertaking for first-time printers: “*Two Stories* was an ambitious beginning for two neophytes with a small handpress. It was prose, to begin with, more type to set per page than poetry and requiring greater care with word spacing, and it was fairly long. With their first handpress the Woolfs could only set two pages at a time, machining one before distributing the type. The process was long and tedious for a thirty-four-page book. The inclusion of woodcuts presented special problems.”⁶⁶ The Woolfs’ production of *Two Stories* speaks to their serious ambitions for their new venture, their openness to collaborative productions, and their excitement over the inclusion of visual images in their books.

The Woolfs commissioned Dora Carrington to design and produce four woodcuts to accompany their stories. Carrington eagerly agreed to do the artwork in a letter to Virginia: “I am only too delighted at the prospect of my humble wood cuts embellishing your literary masterpiece, + going out into the world again. But I feel they are poor [feathers] to adorn your hat. In fact so great is my shame that I may do you another this morning to replace that inferior one of the fire place.”⁶⁷ The Woolfs responded telling Carrington in a letter in July 1917 that they “liked the wood cuts immensely” and asserting that the woodcuts “make the book more interesting than it would have been without.”⁶⁸ The letter also comments that they particularly liked the plates featuring the “servant girl and the plates” and “the snail” and announces also that they “see [they] must make a practice of always having pictures.”⁶⁹ While the Woolfs did not actually “always” include pictures, they did go on to publish an edition of Virginia Woolf’s *Kew Gardens* embellished with many illustrations by Vanessa Bell, Roger Fry’s *Twelve*

Original Woodcuts, and a book of reproductions of Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs, *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men & Fair Women*.⁷⁰ The Woolfs' correspondence with Carrington illuminates the Hogarth Press' interest in visual accompaniments to their texts and suggests that they sensed that such visual adornments increase the value of the material form of a book.

Carrington's woodcuts visually frame the text of the two stories of *Two Stories*: the first image of two men in a graveyard faces the first page of Leonard's "Three Jews" and the plate featuring the servant girl appears at the bottom of its final page; the fireplace image heads the opening page of Virginia's "The Mark on the Wall" while the final largest picture of the snail appears at the bottom of the final page of that story.

Carrington appears to have selected the contents of her images; her decision to feature the graveyard scene and the servant girl with the plates emphasizes those elements in the story above the others. Indeed, her illustrations elide the opening narrator (the first of the "Three Jews") entirely, focusing instead on the later narratives of the second and third Jews. Thus the image of the two men surrounded by graves refers to an event which doesn't unfold until the middle of the story, pages after it appears.



Figure 5.9: Untitled image facing the opening of "Three Jews"

This dissonance of word and image accentuates the opening speaker's feelings of alienation from his surroundings as he is even shut out of the illustrations. The first woodcut image of the graveyard is strangely discordant from the opening lines of the story which open with in the first person discussing a time of the beginning of Spring: "It was a Sunday and the first day of spring, the first day on which one felt at any rate spring in the air. It blew in at my window with its warm breath, with its inevitable little touch of sadness. I felt restless, and I had nowhere to go; everyone I knew was out of town."⁷¹ Rather than serving to clarify the story, the opening woodcut image disorients the reader. The image seems unconnected to the text on the page that faces it and the depiction of two men together in a graveyard seems even to directly counter the narrator's assurance of his loneliness and his reiterations of the phrase "the first stirring of the blood" to describe his mood and the scene set by the dawning of spring.

The disorienting juxtaposition of the opening pages' image and text adds to the development of the initial narrator's position as an outsider and as an alien amidst the scene he sets. His stance as an observer is emphasized through his repeated descriptions of "the quiet orderly English people" and through his reiterations of "they" to describe everyone else in the scene which function to set the narrating-"I" apart from the others. This sense of distance suggests the first man's alienation and difference from the English people becomes legible when his Jewish race is revealed to the reader through his encounter with the second "Jew." The two men acknowledge their shared difference and dissonance within the scene as the first man exclaims to the second man who asks to join his table: "You knew me at once and I knew you. We show up, don't we, under the apple-blossom and this sky. It doesn't belong to us, do you wish it did?"⁷² The first

narrator's emphasis on the visual here—"we show up"—again seems interesting in the ways in which neither man fully shows up in Carrington's illustrations (the first man is entirely missing, and the second is only shown from the back as he speaks to the third "Jew," his grave-digging interlocutor). Leonard's narrative employs the frame story of the first "Jew" and his experiences at Kew and then utterly drops this frame at the end, as the story concludes rather abruptly with the third "Jew's" refusal to accept a servant girl as his daughter-in-law. This ending does not return to the opening scene of telling but rather ends with the grave-digger's "brooding" and with the final woodcut of the servant girl washing her dishes.⁷³



Figure 5.10: Untitled image at the foot of the final page of "Three Jews"

Carrington's woodcut here forms the final image of the story and in a way her decision to illustrate the girl emphasizes the inassimilable quality of the hard fact of the servant girl who the grave-digger refuses to accept, not because of her different faith, but because of her degrading occupation: "I couldn't do it. One must have some dignity."⁷⁴

Carrington's woodcuts bookend Leonard's story and emphasize the slightly jarring aspects of his narrative by contributing to the alienation and eventual elision of the initial speaker and by crystallizing the story's closing image with the grave-digger's refusal to accept a servant girl into his family.

Two woodcuts by Carrington also frame Virginia's story "The Mark on the Wall" and in this second case they draw more directly from the text's opening and closing moments: the first image of a fireside scene corresponds with the story's opening description of the narrator sitting in front of the fire and the final image of an enlarged view of a snail depicts the story's closing gesture in the declaration, "For it was a snail." Virginia's story begins in a mood of uncertainty in terms of setting the scene for her narrative and contrasts with the opening of Leonard's story and its firm assertion of day and season: "Perhaps it was the middle of January in the present year that I first looked up and saw the mark on the wall. In order to fix a date it is necessary to remember what one saw. So now I think of the fire; the steady film of yellow light upon the page of my book; the three chrysanthemums in the round glass bowl on the mantelpiece" (19). These first few sentences interesting provide very specific visual clues which Carrington entirely leaves out of her illustration—indeed, the chrysanthemums and the bowl are entirely absent from the oddly angular mantelpiece and the book is barely visible if it is present at all while the dog has been added in.



Figure 5.11: Untitled image at the top of the first page of "The Mark on the Wall"

And perhaps more interestingly the mark on the wall has also been left out of the image which does not seem to extend the view far enough about the mantelpiece to include the

mark: “the mark was a small round mark, black upon the white wall, about six or seven inches above the mantelpiece.”⁷⁵

As the story develops, the tense of the narrative shifts from its opening statements in past tense toward the present and it accomplishes this shift from the first viewing of the mark to encompass many subsequent viewings by describing the narrator’s memory of the former occupants of the house as being “torn asunder” from the narrator and by concluding with the image of time suspended “as one rushes past in the train.”⁷⁶ After this strange image of time stopping short, the story shifts to present tense: “But as for that mark, I’m not sure about it; I don’t believe it was made by a nail after all; its too big, too round for that. I might get up, but if I got up and looked at it, ten to one I shouldn’t be able to say for certain, because once a thing’s done, no one ever knows how it happened.”⁷⁷ Throughout the story, Woolf’s prose swings out in wide loops and ripples exploring topics like loss, afterlife, death, Shakespeare, knowledge, etc. but always returning to the material fact of the mark on the wall and puzzling over what it could be. The narrator in the story at one point reflects: “I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard solid facts”⁷⁸; here the narrator seems to respond to the story’s continual elliptical movement as the narrative swings wide (or deep) until arrested mid-arc by the “hard solid fact” of the mark. As the story concludes the narrator seems increasingly attracted to the materiality of the mark and desires to “jump up and see for [herself] what that mark on the wall really is.”⁷⁹ She describes her apprehension of the mark as though she had “grasped a plank in the sea” as she revels in its objective existence: “Here is something definite, something real.”⁸⁰ The story comes to a close after a final extended arc of imagination involving the personification of the tree—

imagining its thoughts and sensations through its life cycle—only to be then brought up abruptly by another voice: “I’m going out to buy a newspaper.” “Yes?” “Though its no good, buying newspapers.....Nothing ever happens. Curse this war! God damn this war!...All the same, I don’t see why we should have a snail on our wall”. Ah, the mark on the wall! For it was a snail.”⁸¹



Figure 5.12: Untitled image at the foot of the final page of “The Mark on the Wall”

Carrington’s final woodcut seems to emphasize the finality of the story’s closing proclamation about the identity of the mark and to provide an extreme close-up view that could only be obtained if the narrator had indeed jumped up and taken a closer look at the elusive object.

Two Stories celebrates artistic hybridity through its composition of “two stories” by two different authors and its inclusion of both text and woodcuts. This first production of the Hogarth Press anticipates the Press’s longstanding commitment to producing texts that feature collaboration and the mixing of voices and genres in terms of the many translations that they Press published, the juxtaposition of multiple voices

through series like the Hogarth Essays series and the Hogarth Letters series, and the inclusions of introductions or illustrations as part of a Hogarth volume.

The Hogarth Edition of a selection of Julia Margaret Cameron's photographs, *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men and Fair Women*, continues the Hogarth Tradition of assembling multiple voices and media in the material form of their books. Virginia and Leonard published their edition of Cameron's work in 1926 featuring Virginia's short biographical sketch of her great-aunt and a second introduction on the aesthetic qualities of Cameron's photographs by their friend Roger Fry. During the period of the Hogarth Press's production of *Victorian Photographs*, Virginia Woolf was drafting *To the Lighthouse*, attempting to make art out of her past and her family history, at the same time that she was working with the image archive of her great aunt and looking at Cameron's striking images of Woolf's mother.⁸² The material form of the Hogarth edition of *Victorian Photographs* provides multiple voices and angles for re-examining the past—both in terms of the larger British legacy of the Victorian era of “Famous Men and Fair Women” and the personal history of Virginia Woolf's family ties to that legacy. The title of the volume announces the elegiac nature of the image and but also seems to poke fun at the outdatedness of the gender categories as “Famous” and “Fair” are no longer as easily relevant in 1926. Additionally, both Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry create caricatures of the past in their framing introductory gestures to the images while also revering the greatness of individuals from that time. The Hogarth edition constructs Cameron's past, her Victorian contemporaries, and her photographic subjects as at times comically obsolete and distant, while also simultaneously constructing the photographs as serious works of art and Cameron as a serious “artist”

who remains relevant in the modern moment and worthy of the best feasible technological reproduction.

In her introductory biographical sketch, “Julia Margaret Cameron,” Virginia Woolf begins the volume with a humorous and somewhat irreverent anecdote about Cameron’s paternal lineage: “Julia Margaret Cameron, the third daughter of James Pattle of the Bengal Civil Service, was born on June 11, 1815. Her father was a gentleman of marked, but doubtful, reputation, who after living a riotous life and earning the title of “the biggest liar in India,” finally drank himself to death and was consigned to a cask of rum to await shipment to England. The cask was stood outside the widow’s bedroom door. In the middle of the night she heard a violent explosion, rushed out, and found her husband, having burst the lid off his coffin, both upright menacing her in death as he had menaced her in life. [...] [A]fter “Jim Blazes” had been nailed down again and shipped off, the sailors drank the liquor in which the body was preserved, “and, by Jove, the rum ran out and got alight and set the ship on fire! And while they were trying to extinguish the flames she ran on a rock, blew up, and drifted ashore just below Hooghly. And what do you think the sailors said? ‘That Pattle had been such a scamp that the devil wouldn’t let him go out of India!’”⁸³ Here, Woolf introduces her great-aunt through her unseemly father and seems keen to show a more truthful and gritty side of her family past than the volume’s title would indicate. At times, Woolf depicts her great-aunt as a somewhat comical and anachronistic figure—at odds with the restrictive conventions of the times: “She had little respect, at any rate, for the conventions of Putney. She called her butler peremptorily “Man.” Dressed in robes of flowing red velvet, she walked with her friends, stirring a cup of tea as she walked, half-way to the railway station in hot summer

weather.”⁸⁴ Here, there is a sense of respect for her great aunt’s flouting of the provincial conventions of Putney, but then the details of the flouting (the address to the butler, the flowing robes and tea drinking, etc) reduce this act of rebellion to the a trivial and thus comic scale.⁸⁵

While maintaining a slightly mocking air toward Cameron’s social pretensions, Woolf does seem to honor her ancestor’s ability as an artist. She describes her great-aunt’s discovery of the medium of photography, in fact, as a much more desirable outlet for her idiosyncrasies and for her transformative imagination: “In 1865, when she was fifty, her son’s gift of a camera gave her at last an outlet for the energies which she had dissipated in poetry and fiction and doing up houses and concocting curries and entertaining her friends. Now she became a photographer. All her sensibility was expressed, and, what was perhaps more to the purpose controlled in the new born art. The coal-house was turned into a dark room; the fowl-house was turned into a glass-house. Boatmen were turned into King Arthur; village girls into Queen Guenevere. Tennyson was wrapped in rugs: Sir Henry Taylor was crowned with tinsel. The parlour-maid sat for her portrait and the guest had to answer the bell.”⁸⁶ Here, Woolf describes Cameron’s penchant for upsetting conventions, but here this oddity is respected as it creates great art and even “controlled” art (an essential aesthetic achievement that Woolf values in *A Room of One’s Own*). She describes her great-aunt’s devotion to her art and her tireless determination to achieve her aesthetic intentions: “She used to say that in her photography a hundred negatives were destroyed before she achieved one good result; her object being to overcome realism by diminishing just in the least degree the precision of the focus.”⁸⁷ While the biographical sketch maintains its slightly-caricaturing attitude

toward Cameron's eccentricities—"She lavished her photographs upon her friends and relations, hung them in railway waiting-rooms, and offered them, it is said, to porters in default of small change"⁸⁸—the introduction of her aunt ends with a vaguely elegiac and respectful vision of Cameron's final moments in India. The final paragraph paints a picture of an exotic Indian pastoral: "Their house at Kalutara was so surrounded by trees that rabbits and squirrels and minah birds passed in and out while a beautiful tame stag kept guard at the open door [...] Two years later (in 1879) she died. The birds were fluttering in and out of the open door; the photographs were tumbling over the tables; and, lying before a large open window Mrs. Cameron saw the stars shining, breathed one word "Beautiful," and so died."⁸⁹ This strange ending for an introductory biographical note resonates with the endings of Strachey's *Queen Victoria* (1921) and Woolf's own later *Flush: A Biography* (1933) in its description of an imagined final moment of consciousness to provide closure to a biographical narrative. The final vision that Woolf's sketch provides of her great-aunt seems ennobling rather than comic as Cameron's supposed final word captures the aesthetic beauty of the foreign scene and her aesthetic cultivation of beauty in her photographic art.

The Hogarth Edition does not, however, leave Woolf's "Beautiful" as the last word on Cameron, but instead follows Woolf's introduction of the woman and artist with Roger Fry's introduction of the photographs themselves.⁹⁰ Fry begins his introduction, "Mrs. Cameron's Photographs," by remarking on the medium of photography and its contested status as an art: "The position of photography is uncertain and uncomfortable. No one denies its immense services of all kinds, but its status as an independent art has always been disputed. It has never managed to get its Muse or any proper representation

on Parnassus, and yet it will not give up its pretensions altogether. Mrs. Cameron's photographs posed the question long ago, but it was shelved. The present publication affords perhaps a favorable opportunity to reopen the discussion."⁹¹ Fry's introduction evaluates the formal merits of Cameron's photographic legacy and attempts to contextualize her artistic achievements within their historical conditions of possibility: "A number of things contribute to decide whether a period can be transmitted or not [...]. Now it so happens that in the 60's and 70's England was enjoying a spell of strong individualism. People were indeed excessively careful to conform to a certain code of morals, but within the limits of that they were not afraid of their own personalities. That, then, was a favouring condition, and it coincided with the spread of photography and the appearance of Mrs. Cameron."⁹² Fry at times openly mocks the absurd pretensions of these past figures as he distances himself from the affectations of the past generations.

Fry discusses the Pre-Raphaelite movement and its creation of "an extraordinary passion for beauty" with a slightly sardonic tone: "The cult of beauty was a religion and a highly Protestant one, a violent and queasy aversion from the jocular vulgarity of Philistinism. The devotees of this creed cultivated the exotic and precious with all the energy and determination of a dominant class. With the admirable self-assurance which this position gave them they defied ribaldy [sic] and flouted common sense. They had the courage of their affectations; they openly admitted to being "intense." In PLATE 22 we get a picture of this strange world. There is something touching and heroic about the naïve confidence of these people. They are so unconscious of the abyss of ridicule which they skirt, so determined, so conscientious, so bravely provincial [...]. Certainly this 'Rosebud Garden of Girls,' as Mrs. Cameron so bravely entitled her plate, revives for us

a wonderfully remote and strange social situations. We realize something of the solemn ritual which surrounded these beautiful women. How natural it seems to them to make up and pose like this. They have been so fashioned by the art of the day that to be themselves part of a picture is almost an instinctive function.”⁹³ Even at moments when he claims to respect these relics of the past as “perfection,” he compares the great men and beautiful women to garden growths emphasizing his mocking stance toward their affectations: “In that walled-in garden of solid respectability, sheltered by its rigid sexual morality from the storms of passion and by its secluded elevation from the shafts of ridicule, that pervading seriousness provided an atmosphere wherein great men could be grown to perfection [...] In that protected garden of culture women grew to strange beauty, and the men—how lush and rank are their growths! How they abound in the sense of their own personalities!”⁹⁴ While Fry maintains a distanced attitude toward the subjects of Cameron’s work, he does revel in her exploitation of the medium of photography and becomes almost impassioned when praising her talents in portraiture.

Fry celebrates Mrs. Cameron’s “considerable” artistry that is shown particularly in her portraits. As he argues for the status of these photographs as legitimate artistic masterpieces, Fry asserts that Cameron uses her medium and her artistic eye to create portraits that reveal character: “For let there be no mistake about it, the unique record of a whole period which these plates comprise is not due merely to the fact of the existence of the camera, it is far more due to the eye of the artist who directed and focused it. And Mrs. Cameron had a wonderful perception of character as it is expressed in form, and of form as it is revealed or hidden by the incidence of light. Take, for example, the Carlyle. Neither Whistler nor Watts come near to this in the breadth of the conception, in the logic

of the plastic evocations, and neither approach the poignancy of this revelation of character.”⁹⁵ Fry turns to the particular image of Carlyle as evidence of Cameron’s abilities to reveal character and to achieve formal brilliance through manipulating light and he interestingly exalts her artistry over the painterly feats of Whistler and Watts (see Figure 5.13). Fry’s comparison of Cameron’s art to that of rival artists working in the medium of paint in some ways seems inspired by Cameron’s aesthetics which often eschew photographic realism and sharpness in favor of blurred contours and shading which looks more like paint (as in the Carlyle image).

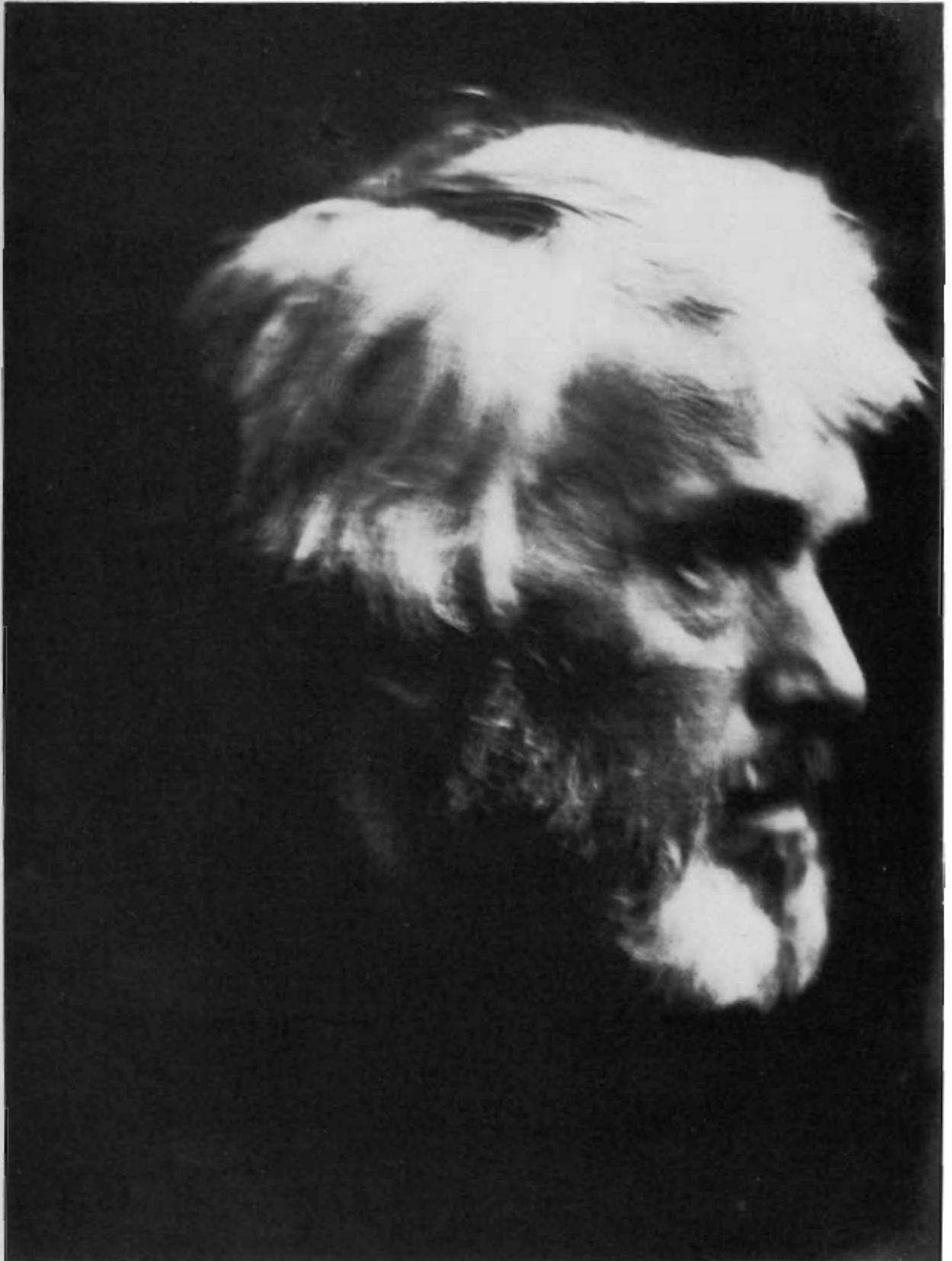


Figure 5.13: Thomas Carlyle

Fry goes on to explain the ways in which Cameron's medium—which might seem like a hindrance (indeed as it is in Woolf's account of the hundreds of negatives required for the production of one good image)—helps her achievement of her artistic ends. Fry describes the photographic processes used by Cameron (she used a wet collodion process)⁹⁶ and the effects that these methods had on her work: “And this masterpiece is accomplished by a patient use of all the accidents and conditions of Mrs. Cameron's medium. For the process she employed was far removed from those of modern photography. The wet plates used on this scale needed, I believe, extra-ordinarily skilful manipulation and demanded a lengthy exposure [...] But it was by an exact sense of how to make use of all these accidents that these astonishing results were secured. It may even be that the long exposure, though I believe it meant destroying far more plates than were kept, was, on happy occasions, actually profitable. The slight movements of the sitter gave a certain breadth and envelopment to the form and prevented those too instantaneous expressions which in modern photography so often have an air of caricature. Both expression and form were slightly generalized; they had not that too acute, too positive quality from which modern photography generally suffers.”⁹⁷ Here, Fry performs an interesting critical move in that he lauds this more archaic version of photography as actually more artistically powerful than modern versions—thus elevating at least one aspect of the Victorians above their modern contemporaries. Indeed, reflecting on a series of the more outstanding portraits, including the daguerreotype-like profile of Virginia Woolf's mother (see Figure 5.14), Fry raises Julia Margaret Cameron up above other artists within her medium: “One cannot doubt that photography's claim

to the status of an art would never have been doubted if it had not been that so few artists have ever used the medium. So far as I know Mrs. Cameron still remains far and away the most distinguished.”⁹⁸

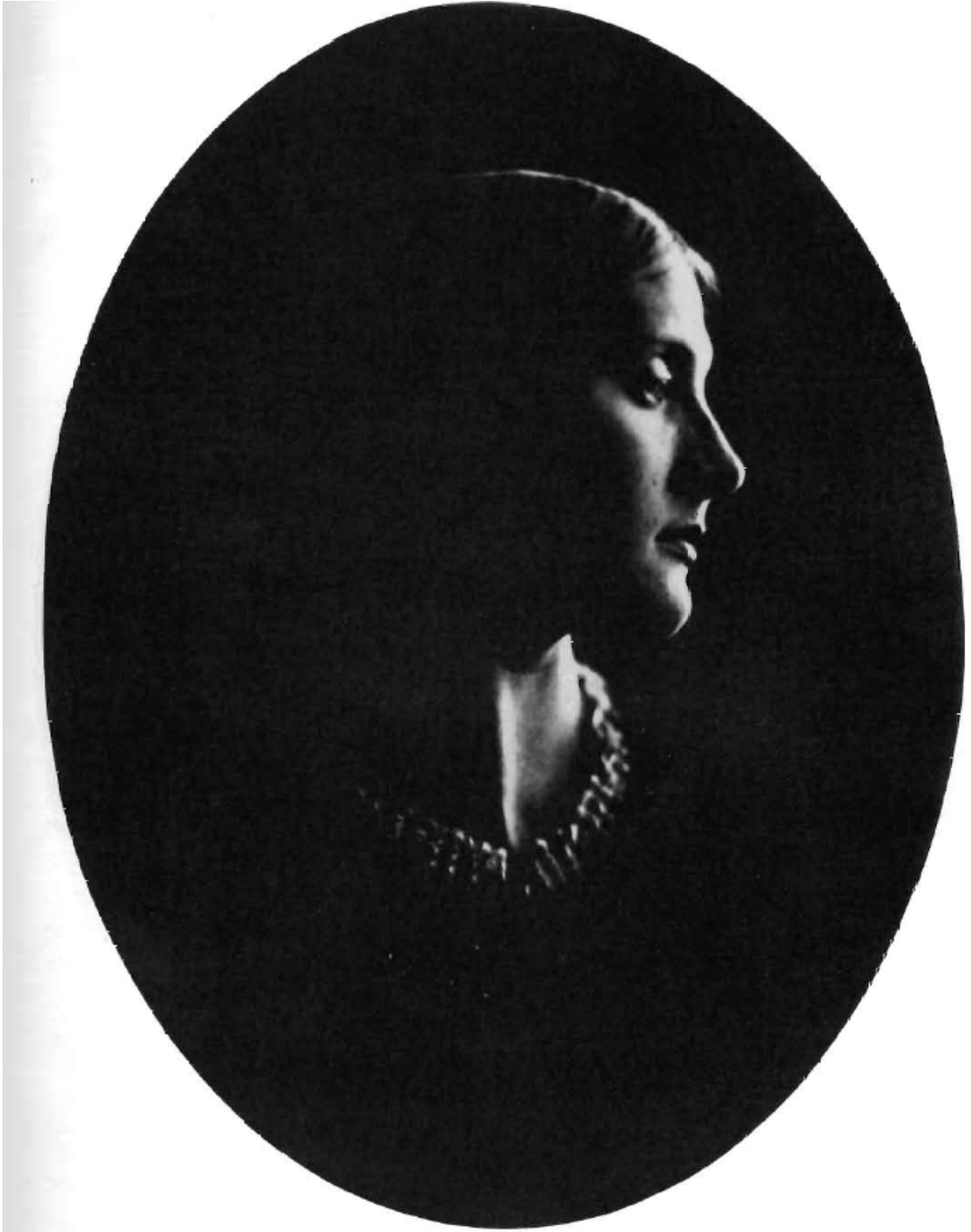


Figure 5.14: Mrs. Leslie Stephen (Mrs. Herbert Duckworth)

Framed by these introductions by Woolf and Fry, Cameron's photographs are left to stand almost by themselves on the pages of the volume and they are reproduced as full-page images. The Woolfs struggled to find the best technology to reproduce the photographs and the extensive archival record of their pursuit of the best possible reproductions illustrates their respect for Cameron's artistry and their commitment to producing the best quality reproductions that they could reasonably afford. As early as July of 1926, Leonard writes to R.J. Tatlock (on the advice of Roger Fry) to inquire about the best means of reproducing Cameron's photographs: "Our difficulty is to find an adequate method of reproduction. We want to have as near as possible exact facsimiles of the photographs, and, after much consideration, we came to the conclusion that an absolutely first class half tone block would give the best results better than collotype. We have had a trial block made, but the results, which I am venturing to send you, are obviously unsatisfactory. Roger thinks that you would probably be good enough to tell us where and how we could get the best results."⁹⁹ Tatlock responds by encouraging Woolf to use the half-tone process (agreeing that collotype "is ruled out" due to the "range of tone being far too great") and dismissing photogravure because it would be "pretty in itself but would not give the same effect as the originals" and also suggesting the possibility of "mak[ing] actual photographic prints of the originals," an option that would be expensive but might offer the most aesthetically pleasing form of reproduction.¹⁰⁰ Leonard becomes intrigued by this more expensive possibility and even writes to a potential photographer to get an estimate before rejecting the plan as too expensive to be feasible.¹⁰¹ The extensive correspondence surrounding the production of

the images illustrates the Press's earnest desire to do justice to Mrs. Cameron's photographs and to achieve the best possible reproductions that they could manage.

The Hogarth Edition of *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men & Fair Women* exemplifies the Hogarth Press's commitment to producing works of quality and artistic merit and their interest in presenting multiple perspectives on topics of interest. The double-framing of the artist and the artwork with the twin introductions to the volume emphasizes the intellectual community surrounding and supporting the Press's productions and circulation. Additionally, the texts and images included in this volume dramatize the modernist problem of how to "make it new" and how to negotiate past figures and forms for modern purposes. As the early announcements and circulars attest, the Hogarth Press was occupied a strange position in the literary marketplace—a position that depended on the Woolfs' fame and privileged position within the Bloomsbury network even while the Press insisted that it wanted to reach new audiences and remain affordable. The demands of the marketplace prevented the Press from selling too cheaply or too widely, but also insured that it always made a profit. The Hogarth Press helped to promote and canonize a sort of ensconced modernism that tried to reach a wider readership, but that made use of its ample Bloomsbury resources to reinstate its coterie and visual appeals. Much of the Press's success depended on the physical labor and tireless work of Leonard and Virginia—Virginia makes this human side of the press palpable in a letter Roger Fry, explaining that they "have been in a welter of Hogarth Press affairs, & my fingers are like cauliflowers from addressing envelopes"¹⁰²—and on the steady income provided by Virginia Woolf's saleable works and rising fame.

Conclusion

Both the Boni & Liveright Publishing House and the Hogarth Press produced and marketed material forms of modernism by making use of the advantages of their particular vantage points onto the literary marketplace. Hogarth Press drew from its vast resources of contacts and literary friends for submissions, artwork, introductions, subscriptions, etc. and made much of its profits from Virginia Woolf's own work. On the other side of the pond, Boni & Liveright made the most of their upstart position—using their lack of establishment ties as a motivation for eschewing old models and a more established literary canon in favor of new modes of advertising and new kinds of writing, publishing highly experimental modernism, overtly political writing, and sensational best-sellers. In contrast to the Hogarth Press and its continual negotiation of the appropriate pricing for its productions and the best way to leverage its privileged access to the cultural elite, the Boni and Liveright Press began its publishing career with no industry ties or connections. Boni and Liveright used this lack of constraint to publish a vast array of texts including highly experimental and highly scandalous books and to innovate in their advertising techniques. Both Presses promoted the publication of many of the major works and authors that came to be celebrated under the rubric of “modernism” and both publishing houses were willing to take chances on lesser known authors or works that might not sell many copies in order to ensure that “good books” and “works of genuine merit” could reach a public (however small). This chapter has shown how these two vessels of print culture enabled the circulation of modernist texts through their own complex balancing acts in the literary marketplace. Through marketing campaigns (in periodicals, in circulars and announcements, in notices at the ends of their books, etc) and through the material forms of the texts that they produced, both presses

fostered modernist literary experimentation in the books that they published. Horace Liveright created a “Bedlam” on the book page and Virginia and Leonard Woolf worked their fingers into “cauliflowers” and both Boni & Liveright and the Hogarth Press found a way to publish modernism.

¹ Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf: Volume III: 1923-1928*, edited by Nigel Nicolson and Joanne Trautman (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1977), 55-56.

² Cited in Tom Dardis, *Firebrand: The Life of Horace Liveright* (New York: Random House, 1995), 96.

³ Laura Marcus, "Virginia Woolf and the Hogarth Press," *Modernist Writers and the Marketplace*, edited by Ian Willison, Warwick Gould, and Warren Chernaik, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 126. In *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press, 1917-41* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992), J. H. Willis echoes Marcus's view and cites Leonard's take on the publication's effect on Eliot's career: "Publishing Eliot's *Poems* and *The Waste Land* was an act of friendship by the Woolfs as well as a shrewd publishing decision. The rewards to both parties were far greater than the small royalties. Eliot's English career was thereby assisted, the audience for his poetry expanded, and the Hogarth Press's reputation as a modernist press grew. Leonard, thinking back about his role in Eliot's life, wrote, "I helped him to become an Englishman by becoming one of his statutory sponsors, and I am, I think legitimately, proud that I not only printed and published *The Waste Land* but had a hand in converting its author from an American to an English poet' (*Sowing* 52)"(74). Hereafter referred to as Willis with page numbers.

⁴ David H. Porter, "'We All Sit on the Edge of Stools and Crack Jokes': Virginia Woolf and The Hogarth Press," *Book Illustrated: Text, Image, and Culture, 1770-1930*, edited by Catherine J. Golden (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 285.

⁵ Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf: Volume II: 1912-1922*, edited by Nigel Nicholson and Joanne Trautmann. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1976), 378. Cited in reference to Eliot's poems by J. H. Willis in *Leonard and Virginia Woolf as Publishers: The Hogarth Press, 1917-41* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 30.

⁶ Willis, 173, 73.

⁷ Willis, 73. Willis provides further details of the sales of Eliot's poem: "In 1923, however, the sales were not sensational. According to Leonard Woolf's account book, the press had sold only 47 copies by subscription before publication and 189 copies by December 4. In the first three months of 1924, *The Waste Land* sold an additional 141 copies, bringing the total to 330 copies sold by March 31, 1924 (six and a half months after publication) (ABS 183). Eliot earned £7.5 on these copies (25 percent of the profits), and the press earned £21.16.6. The edition did not sell out until early 1925" (73). Leonard Woolf provides further details about the production of the poem in a letter responding to Daniel Woodward (who says he's doing a "note on [TSE's *The Waste Land*] for a bibliographic journal" in a letter dated December 1, 1962). Leonard's response follows:

"The answers to your questions are so far as I can give them:

-
- (1) No one in 1920 would have published THE WASTE LAND. We started the Hogarth Press in 1917 as a hobby; really the hobby was printing. It was only causally that we published what we printed at first and we suggested to Eliot that we should print and publish poems of his. We first published the book called POEMS and then THE WASTE LAND.
 - (2) The above explains why we printed the book with our own hands. No books were printed commercially until the second edition of KEW GARDENS. The first edition of KEW GARDENS sold out so quickly that we had to have a second edition for us printed commercially.
 - (3) I don't remember whether we printed from the text in THE CRITERION. Mr. Eliot certainly read the proofs.
 - (4) It took a year or two to sell out the edition.
 - (5) We did not bind all copies of the book in the same binding or always with the same labels."

(Leonard Woolf Papers, University of Sussex, Folder IQ3c)

Another letter (dated 23/3/66) from Leonard to Ian Parsons from the Leonard Woolf Papers also details the sales information on the volume:

"I read the article about Tom. The sales facts are as follows. We published POEMS in May 1919. We printed 200 copies. The first copy sold to a bookseller was one copy to James Bain on May 29. We sold 4 copies to the Poetry Bookshop on June 12 and 7 to Hatchards on June 18. The first order from Simpkin was for 15 on July 25, and their last was for 7 on October 15. After 12 months we had sold 168 copies. By September 17, 1920 we had sold 183 copies and the book was out of print.

We published THE WASTE LAND on 12 Sept., 1923. By the end of 1923 we had sold 306 copies; in the first six months of 1924 we sold 79 copies, and in the next six months 49. The book went out of print on February 11, 1925, when we had sold 443 copies.

When we published POEMS Tom was practically unknown and so he was in 1923 when we published WASTE LAND. A few people, like ourselves, thought him a very good poet, but the general view was that he was unintelligible and ridiculous. The Literary Establishment continued to think WASTE LAND absurd, but it had an immediate success with the young. After 1925 MSS poured into the H.P. of poems imitating Waste Land in vocabulary, rhythm, subject, and obscurity. (Leonard Woolf Papers University of Sussex, Folder IQ3c).

⁸ Donna Rhein reflects upon the Woolfs' gesture of placing an advertisement at the end of Eliot's text: "There was no doubt in the Woolfs' minds that this book would sell, so the publication address includes the full address and, though the Woolfs may have considered *The Waste Land* a work of genius, they had no qualms about attaching a list of previous Hogarth titles to the endpaper, a practice begun in 1920 with E.M. Forster's *Song of the Siren*. At least in this instance, they were considerate enough of the text not to place the advertisements opposite a printed page or on the verso of the last text page" (24). Donna Rhein, in *The Handprinted Books of Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1917-1932* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985), 24.

⁹ Tom Dardis, *Firebrand: The Life of Horace Liveright* (New York: Random House, 1995), 96. Hereafter referred to as Dardis with the page numbers.

¹⁰ In a letter to Liveright dated January 11th, 1923, Toomer accepts his contract for *Cane* stating: “I am glad to be in the fold. There is no other like it. The American group with Waldo Frank, Gorham B. Munson, TS Eliot—well, it simply cant [sic] be beaten” (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Jean Toomer Collection JMJMS1 Box 1, Folder 16).

¹¹ Walker Gilmer, *Horace Liveright: Publisher of the Twenties*, (New York: David Lewis, 1970), note. 54, 245. Hereafter referred to as Gilmer with the page numbers.

¹² Gilmer, 37-38. In this section he cites: in note 54 “According to the 1930 Statement of Operations, 2,579 copies of *The Waste Land* had been sold.” The remainder of the paragraph is based on the Komroff interview.

¹³ For further discussion of frontispieces see Janine Barchas’s insightful work on book design from the 18th Century, *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Barnes’s only previously book volume being *A Book of Repulsive Women* (1915) which resembled a pamphlet and was privately printed by Guido Bruno “In his Garret in Washington Square New York” for 15 cents.

¹⁵ This review is cited in the Dictionary of Literary Biography volume (Volume 288) devoted to Boni & Liveright, *The House of Boni & Liveright, 1917-1933: A Documentary Volume*, vol 288, Ed. Charles Egleston (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2004), 284. Here after cited as DLB with the page numbers.

¹⁶ Michael Soto, “Jean Toomer and Horace Liveright; or, A New Negro Gets “into the Swing of It,” *Jean Toomer and the Harlem Renaissance*, edited by Genevieve Fabre and Michel Feith (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 182.

¹⁷ *The New York Times Book Review*, Oct 7th, 1923, 18.

¹⁸ Djuna Barnes, *A Book* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1923), 220.

¹⁹ Cited in DLB 284 from the “Liveright Publishing Corporation Archives” Barnes responds “These terms are acceptable to me” (DLB 284).

²⁰ See Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Cultures*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

²¹ Gilmer, 27-28.

²² Walker Gilmer tells the story of the firm's founding stating that one day while both Boni and Liveright were working at an advertising firm owned by Alfred Wallerstein, Liveright came into the office one day with "an armload of manufacturing possibilities, in this case various kinds of household gadgets. He immediately fell upon Boni, the other occupant of the office and a total stranger to him, and asked his opinion of the relative merits of each device. Boni, who was surprised but game, matched Liveright's enthusiasm by carefully considering each one and finally choosing a self-sealing jar lid as the best sales prospect. This important decision made, Liveright listened while Boni told him about his publishing ventures and his idea for a series of reprints that would include only modern classics by European writers. Liveright, utterly unprepared in any way for the publishing business, but excited by Boni's idea, immediately offered himself as a partner. Boni was nearly broke, but Liveright proposed to finance their operation with the "last" of his father-in-law's loans. As equal partners—Liveright put up the \$12,500 for capitalization, while Boni supplied \$4000 and the idea—the two men began at once to plan their business organization and make up their first list" (Gilmer, 4-5).

²³ After Liveright married Lucille Elsas, he began to work on projects sponsored by her rich father Mr. Elsas and his "International Paper company" which made the Lily cup "a paper cup that could once be found in nearly every business office in the United States" (Dardis, 37).

"One of the first schemes that Horace undertook for the Elsas companies was Pick-Quick toilet paper, a merchandising gimmick that misfired badly; there was no market for Dickensian toilet paper" (Dardis, 43).

²⁴ Dardis describes Boni's inspiration for the Modern Library as brought about by the arrival of a little package in 1915 which "changed everything": "the little package was a tiny volume of scenes from Shakespeare; it was distributed by a tobacco manufacturer who wished to drum up trade for the sale of cigars and cigarettes by placing the little volumes in the packages. Albert Boni found the idea of "little books" intriguing; he and his brother discussed the possibilities of merchandising some of them" (47). The first incarnation of Boni's idea was a 25 cent little imitation leather copy of *Romeo and Juliet* that he sent to the Whitman Chocolate Company of Philadelphia with the idea that the book would be sold in the "more popular boxes of chocolate" (48). Whitman ordered 15,000 books before they had even made any and they had to raise money overnight and called the product: "Little Leather Library" (Dardis 48). Next they sold to the Woolworth "chain of five-and-ten-cent stores" (48). "In the first year of their enterprise, over a million books were sold" (48). For unknown reasons the Bonis sold both the Little Leather Library and their Washington Square bookstore by 1916.

²⁵ The first ML books from 1917 (including Wilde's *Dorian Gray*, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Kipling, Dostoevsky, and others): "Priced at sixty cents each, bound in limp lambskin, and duodecimo in size, most of these books could not be found elsewhere in such a convenient and attractive form; some, moreover, were out of print and others unavailable in this country. The demand for the first volumes in the Modern Library was so great that Boni and Liveright decided to issues six more titles immediately" (Gilmer 11).

²⁶ Dardis, 55.

²⁷ Dardis, 55.

²⁸ Gilmer, 19.

²⁹ Gilmer, 19.

³⁰ Gilmer, 26.

³¹ June Howard's commentary on earlier drafts of this project has been instrumental in placing Boni & Liveright's practices (and the claims of their biographers) in a broader historical context. Also, her discussion of Harper's strategies for marketing *The Whole Family* (published serially at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century) in *Publishing the Family* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001) helps to situate Boni & Liveright within a longer history. For example, Howard documents the multiple strategies Harper's used to sell *The Whole Family*—including a guessing game where readers could write in and guess which author wrote which chapter of the collaborative serial narrative—and points out the ways in which the International Copyright Law (1891) encouraged more aggressive marketing strategies by “offering improved security for exploiting literary properties” making “investing money in promoting an author or book [...] better business when increased sales were certain to benefit the investor, not someone with a competing edition” (94).

³² This blurb is quoted from the dust jacket held in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

³³ Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature* (New York: Oxford University press, 1994), 168.

³⁴ Much critical conversation has been generated by Toomer's own response to the firm's desire to overtly “feature negro” in their advertisements. When asked for a more racially explicit biographical sketch to market his book, Toomer expresses his own views on the subject in a letter dated September 5th, 1923 to Liveright about promoting *Cane* as regards his race: “My racial composition and my position in the world are realities which I alone may determine. Just what these are, I sketched in for you the day I had lunch with you. As a unit in the social milieu [sic] I expect and demand acceptance of myself on their basis. I do not expect to be told what I should consider myself to be. Nor do I expect you as my publisher, and I hope [“as” inserted in pen] my friend, to either directly or indirectly state that this basis contains any element of dodging. [...] As a B and L author, I make the distinction between my fundamental position and the position which your publicity department may wish to establish for me in order that *Cane* reach as large a public as possible, In this connection I have told you, I have told Messrs Toby and Schneider to make use of whatever racial factors you wish. Feature Negro if you wish, but do not expect me to feature it [“in” inserted in pen] advertisements for you. For

myself, I have sufficiently featured Negro in Cane.” (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Jean Toomer Collection MJMSS1 Box 1, Folder 16)

³⁵ Soto, 182.

³⁶ The advertisement below ran in *The New York Times Book Review*, September 16, 1923

To such recent literature of the negro as Stribling's *Birthright*, DuBois' *Dark Water*, and O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, has been added a new interpretation of negro life.

CANE

by Jean Toomer

Presents emotional, dramatic, genre pictures (in Washington and Georgia) of negro life whose rhythmic beat, like the primitive tom-toms of the African jungle, you can feel because it is written by a man who has felt it historically, poetically, and with deepest understanding.

\$2.00

Boni & Liveright, N.Y.

Good Books

³⁷ Walker Gilmer reflects on the uninhibited position of the Liveright, at the head of the young firm: “Liveright published scores of books which were new in method and content and which questioned or openly criticized the accepted ideals of American society. These are the qualities, more than any others, which characterized both the man and the era—and which found expression in his books. Many an innovative thinker, not yet critically or financially established, found an eager sponsor in Liveright, for he seemed to be a publisher writers could and did exploit” (Gilmer, viii).

³⁸ In contrast to Boni & Liveright, older houses and standards were not accepting of young radical authors: “A world at war, large-scale economic depression, and the challenging of standards were forces of the future. To the rebels of the 1910’s—both writers and publishers—conservative houses run by cautious executives appeared to

follow a patter of publishing harmless historical fiction, westerns, uplifting religious tracts, and happy, saccharine tales of contemporary life; indeed, best-seller lists from 1900 to 1915 seem to substantiate their conviction” (Gilmer 6). Anti-Semitism also played a role in the development of these alternative publishing avenues according to Walker Gilmer: “According to many retired publishing executives anti-Semitism was general among publishers in the 1910’s. Young Jews interested in publishing careers either were refused jobs outright when they applied at old-line houses or were told that for *them* there would be no opportunity for advancement. As a result, they established their own houses which lacked any allegiance to the entrenched Anglo-American literary heritage, that foundation of respectable conservatism which had proved so profitable for their older rivals” (Gilmer 8).

³⁹ Dardis, xvi.

⁴⁰ Gilmer, viii.

⁴¹ Gilmer, 26.

⁴² Soto, 177-178, cf *Time Exposures*, 115-116).

⁴³ According to Dardis, even when BL reissued and reprinted “A Book” in 1929 featuring the O’Henry winning story as its new title “A Night Among the Horses” only sold 375 copies (with a flashy dust jacket design of galloping horses). Ryder in 1928 did sell 3,700 copies though.

⁴⁴ Marcus, 124, cf. *Diary*, vol 1, 1915-1919, 28.

⁴⁵ Willis, 3.

⁴⁶ Marcus, 124.

⁴⁷ Donna Rhein gives further details about the mechanical operation of the Woolf’s hand-press: “The first small hand press owned by the Woolfs was bought [...] on March 23, 1917. With it, they got all the paraphernalia necessary for printing: composing stick, type, cases, chases, and so on. Their press, about the size of a large typewriter, sat in the dining room which became the center of printing activities. It would print one demy-octavo page at a time, perhaps two crown octavo pages [...] It worked by a simple platen device. A handle was brought down and the platen with paper on it was brought up against the type in its chase overhead. With this set-up, the Woolfs would have had to shift the sheet holding four pages four times, printing each page individually, if using the demy-octavo format, turning the sheet over and aligning the type to be printed with that already printed on the other side when they wished to print on both sides of the sheet” (Rhein 4-5). Because of the slowness of this process, after finishing their first book *Two Stories* and moving to their second Katherine Mansfield’s *Prelude* which was 68 pages they found a better press for their needs and in 1921 they bought a larger Minerva machine operated by a treadle which needed to be moved into the larder (Rhein 5).

⁴⁸ Marcus sums up her understanding of the importance of the Press to Virginia Woolf: “In this statement, Virginia Woolf highlights the importance of experiment, of freedom and of a sympathetic readership – the keys to the meaning of the Hogarth Press for her” (125). Marcus also cautions an overemphasis on how much the Press was Bloomsbury-focused: “On the other hand, the relationship between ‘Bloomsbury culture’ and the Hogarth Press is more difficult to define than Rosenbaum suggests. Of the ‘group’ as traditionally defined, only E.M. Forster consistently published with the Hogarth Press, in pamphlet literature rather than fiction. As Willis notes, the established writers like Forster, Maynard Keynes, Roger Fry and Lytton Strachey were already under contract to larger publishers by the time the Woolfs were able to publish full-length manuscripts, and turned to the Hogarth Press for short pieces not easily published elsewhere” (129).

⁴⁹ *Letters* 2:167. This is cited in both Marcus and Willis (43-44).

⁵⁰ Marcus, 130, cf. *Diary* 3, 42-3.

⁵¹ John Mepham has argued in *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1991) that: “Virginia Woolf’s use of those white spaces on the page [in *Jacob’s Room*] is a brilliant invention, perhaps importing into the novel devices of layout that had intrigued her when she was laying out Eliot’s poetry on the page for the Hogarth Press. The gaps hold scenes in a state of disconnection [...] They are an immediately visible sign of Virginia Woolf’s choice of a collage framework for the novel” (79). Virginia Woolf reflects on her experiences as a reader for the Press—in this case regarding a manuscript of Gertrude Stein’s—and its affects on her thoughts about her own place in literary history in a letter to Roger Fry dated Sept 16, 1925: “This reminds me – if you are in Paris, please ferret out some little man who sells printing paper. All the new French reprints are on a yellowish thinnish paper which is said to be immensely cheaper than anything English. We are making an effort to cut down our prices; & they all centre upon paper. We are lying crushed under an immense manuscript of Gertrude Stein’s. I cannot brisk myself up to deal with it – whether her contortions are genuine or fruitful, or only such spasms as we might all go through in sheer impatience at having to deal with English prose. Edith Sitwell says she’s gigantic (meaning not the flesh, but the spirit). For my own part I wish we could skip a generation – skip Edith & Gertrude & Tom & Joyce & Virginia & come out in the open again, when everything has been re started [sic], & runs full tilt, instead of trickling & teasing in this irritating way. I think its [sic] bad for the character too, to live in a bye stream, & have to consort with eccentricities – witness our poor Tom, who is behaving (I cant [sic] go into details, - I dont [sic] suppose you need them) more like an infuriated hen, or an old maid who has been kissed by the butler than ever” (U of Sussex, SxMs18 Monks House Papers Letters III: Virginia Woolf, Farrell-Lubbock labeled box 72, Folder Fry, Roger).

⁵² The British Library estimates that this document was sent out either in 1919 or 1920, which seems about right since the “except one” indicates that it was produced after the second edition of *Kew Gardens* (the first book the Woolfs had printed for them) and before other books were sent out for production (British Library, Cup.21.g.26(24)).

⁵³ The rest of the announcement details the Woolfs ideas about a new subscription system: “We shall in future from time to time publish other works of a similar kind. For the convenience of those who might desire to purchase copies and to avoid the necessity of continually sending small sums of money, we are prepared to receive deposits of 10s., £1, or over, under the following conditions. If so directed, we will forward one or more copies of each of our publications to the person making the deposit, until the sum so deposited is exhausted. Alternatively, we will inform the person making the deposit of the publication as each appears, and will forward a copy or copies on receipt of instruction to do so.

Yours very truly,
Virginia Woolf
Leonard Woolf” (British Library,

Cup.21.g.26(24))

⁵⁴ University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, SxMs13, Hogarth Press Folders IQ3a.

⁵⁵ Cape goes on to suggest a plan for the joint publication of Virginia’s works: “I would like to make another proposal to you. If you and Mrs Woolf will consent to my publishing a Collected edition of her work at five shillings, under a joint imprint of The Hogarth Press and Jonathan Cape, I can offer you a royalty of twelve and a half per cent (12 ½ %), twelve copies as twelve, with an advance of five hundred pounds (£500) on account of royalties payable on signing the agreement. Will you think it over?” (Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 546: General, Uniform Ed, &c). This letter resulted from Cape’s request to print his own edition of *The Common Reader*: in a letter dated April 12, 1929, addressed to Mr. Woolf, Cape proposes his plan: “I should like very much if it could be arranged, to publish Mrs. Woolf’s *THE COMMON READER* in The Travellers Library. I think the book would find another public in that Series. NO doubt you are still selling it in the larger format. I do not think that its publication in The Travellers Library would affect the sale of the library edition to any very great extent. On The Travellers Library we pay a uniform royalty of ten per cent; the published price is, as no doubt you know, 3/6d.” (Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 552 V. Woolf *The Common Reader*). Leonard’s response to Cape dated 13 April 1929 outlines his own plan for the Collected edition: “Many thanks for your letter about *THE COMMON READER*. We are, however, going to begin in the autumn the publication of a cheap edition at 3/6 of all my wife’s books including *THE COMMON READER*. In fact we have just bought from Duckworth the rights in her first two books in order that we can make the edition complete. I am sorry that this makes it impossible for us to accept your offer.” (Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 552 V. Woolf *The Common Reader*).

⁵⁶ Leonard Woolf’s response dated 22 April 1929. (Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 546: General, Uniform Ed, &c)

⁵⁷ University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, Folder IQ3a.

⁵⁸ The note continues by explaining that the unexpected success of their venture has necessitated the Hogarth Press's shift from in house printing to using professional printers: "It had been our original intention to print every book with our own hands, but the sales much exceeded our expectation. We found ourselves compelled to issue editions not of two or three hundred but of one or two thousand, and thus in many cases it became necessary to employ the services of professional printers" (University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, Folder IQ3a.)

⁵⁹ University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, Folder IQ3a.

⁶⁰ University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, Folder IQ3a.

⁶¹ The Hogarth Press announcement concludes by offering two subscription offers to its customers: "The position of the Press is, we hope, now secure. But there is one respect in which we venture to say that our clients can help us considerably at little cost to themselves. The work of the Press is carried on by amateurs, in their spare time, in the somewhat cramped conditions of a private house. These facts are mentioned only that you may realise how greatly our labours would be lightened if those who intend to buy our books would signify their intention beforehand. It would not only help us to gauge the size of an edition, but would save our customers the disappointment of learning (as was the case, for example, with our edition of Mr. Fry's woodcuts) that the first edition has been sold out before the day of publication, and some time must pass before a second can be prepared.

We therefore invite you to fill up the form enclosed and to become an A subscriber to the Hogarth Press. All publications are sent to A subscribers as they appear and payment is made upon receipt of books. But to obviate the inconvenience of sending small sums of money we are ready to receive deposits of any amount from which we will deduct the sums due to us and furnish you with a yearly statement of accounts.

In case, however, you should prefer to make your own choice from our list, we have provided the form for B subscribers enclosed. Notices of our publications will be sent regularly to B subscribers and they have only to return the list with a mark against the volumes desired" (University of Sussex, Leonard Woolf Papers, Folder IQ3a).

⁶² Rhein, 11.

⁶³ Rhein, 11.

⁶⁴ Willis, 15.

⁶⁵ Virginia Woolf asked her friend Roger Fry for the list in a letter dated September 10th, 1916 sent from Asheham House: "I meant to ask whether you have a list of possible buyers at the Omega, which you would lend us when it comes to sending post cards about the press. However, this can wait" (U of Sussex, SxMs18 Monks House Papers Letters III: Virginia Woolf, Farrell-Lubbock labeled box 72, Folder Fry, Roger).

⁶⁶ Willis, 16.

⁶⁷ U of Sussex, SxMs18 Monks House Papers III Letters Virginia Woolf Bosanquet-Cecil, Folder: Carrington.

⁶⁸ Rhein, 14.

⁶⁹ Rhein, 14.

⁷⁰ Virginia Woolf's letter to Roger Fry dated July 22nd July 1917 reiterates her excitement about the prospect of printing pictures and most likely opens with her discussion of *Two Stories*: "I'm sending a copy of the book to Dunbins; & 4 to the Omega, but we're very nearly sold out, so if you dont [sic] want them there, we shall be quite glad to have them back. You will see lots of mistakes, but we're rather proud, considering we learnt as we went. Tomorrow we are going to see a £100 press which we are told is the best made, & particularly good for reproducing pictures. This opens up fresh plans, as you will see. Wouldn't it be fun to have books of pictures only, reproductions of new pictures – but we must get you to tell us a little about how one does this. Carrington is swarming with woodcuts. Its most fascinating work." (U of Sussex, SxMs18 Monks House Papers Letters III: Virginia Woolf, Farrell-Lubbock labeled box 72, Folder Fry, Roger).

⁷¹ Leonard and Virginia Woolf, *Two Stories* (Richmond, UK: The Hogarth Press 1917), 5. Hereafter referred to as *TS* with page numbers.

⁷² *TS*, 8.

⁷³ *TS*, 18.

⁷⁴ *TS*, 18.

⁷⁵ *TS*, 20.

⁷⁶ *TS*, 20.

⁷⁷ *TS*, 20-21.

⁷⁸ *TS*, 23.

⁷⁹ *TS*, 28.

⁸⁰ *TS*, 29.

⁸¹ *TS*, 31.

⁸² J.H. Willis documents the timeline of Woolf's creation of *To the Lighthouse* and her simultaneous production of her edition of Cameron's photographs: "Virginia Woolf had begun thinking about her next novel, *To the Lighthouse*, as *Mrs. Dalloway* was published in May 1925. After beginning it optimistically in that summer, however, she suffered a physical and emotional collapse on August 19 and for five months thereafter experienced

unstable health. Not until January 1926 could she return to writing *To the Lighthouse*. In March she worked on the dinner scene, and by April she had finished part one. By May 25 she had finished the experimental, intermediate part two, "Time Passes." During June and July [1926], as she struggled to transmute her memories of her mother and father into the fictional portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, Virginia Woolf began to assemble material for a book of photographs by her great-aunt Julia Margaret Cameron. One of the early, talented amateur photographers, Julia Cameron took pictures of the great (Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Jowett), of the unknown (postmen, servant girls, delivery men), and often of children and members of the family. She is particularly remembered today for her evocative portraits of Virginia Woolf's mother Julia, then married to her first husband, Herbert Duckworth. Virginia, preparing to write an introduction to the book of twenty-four photographic plates, asked her sister Vanessa if she had any of Julia Cameron's letters. She pointedly did not want to ask her half brother George Duckworth for help. The project must have affected Virginia at a level too deeply personal for her to contemplate involving her despised half brother. The Hogarth Press published great-aunt Julia's pictures with introduction by Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry as *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men and Fair Women* in October 1926. The title might almost have applied to Woolf's novel" (130-131).

⁸³ Ed. Tristram Powell, *Victorian Photographs of Famous Men & Fair Women by Julia Margaret Cameron* (Boston: David R. Godine 1973), 13. Hereafter referred to as *VP* with page numbers.

⁸⁴ *VP*, 15.

⁸⁵ Woolf develops this tone further in her account of Cameron's aggressive acts of generosity: "If it was impossible to reject her affection, it was even dangerous to reject her shawls. Either she would burn them, she threatened, then and there, or, if the gift were returned, she would sell it, buy with the proceeds a very expensive invalid sofa, and present it to the Putney Hospital for Incurables with an inscription which said, much to the surprise of Lady Taylor, when she chanced upon it, that it was the gift of Lady Taylor herself. It was better, on the whole, to bow the shoulder and submit to the shawl" (*VP* 15-16).

⁸⁶ *VP*, 18.

⁸⁷ These sentences are presented in quotation marks without source given, *VP*, 18.

⁸⁸ *VP*, 18.

⁸⁹ *VP*, 18.

⁹⁰ Leonard Woolf specifically requests an introduction from Fry addressing the photographs' "artistic merits" in a letter to Roger Fry dated June 19th 1926:

"My Dear Roger,

We are going to bring out a book of Mrs Cameron's photographs, and we are most anxious that you should write us a very short introduction of say 2500 words

dealing with their artistic merits. We would offer you a fee twelve guineas. Will you do it? And do you think the fee reasonable? And, finally could you possibly let us have the introduction by the middle of July? I do hope you are better.

Yours, (signed Leonard Woolf)”

(Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 50, Cameron, Mrs. VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS)

⁹¹ *VP*, 23.

⁹² *VP*, 23.

⁹³ *VP*, 24.

⁹⁴ *VP*, 24-25.

⁹⁵ *VP*, 26.

⁹⁶ Tristram Powell elaborates the specifics of Cameron’s technology more fully in his introduction to his revised and expanded edition of *Victorian Photographs*: “Mrs. Cameron used the wet collodion process which had been invented by Frederick Scott-Archer in 1851. A glass plate was used instead of paper as a surface for the emulsion. The glass was free of grain and therefore gave much better definition than the textured paper negative did. Scott-Archer had found that collodion, a solution of gun cotton in alcohol, was a suitable medium for carrying the chemicals, as long as the solution, which supported the chemicals, remained wet. The plates had therefore to be prepared by the photographer on the site. A highly polished, spotless glass plate had to be evenly coated with collodion solution and dipped into a bath of nitrate of silver to make the emulsion sensitive to light. It was then taken out, in semi-darkness, fitted into a slide, placed in the camera, exposed and then immediately developed. A knock, changes in temperature, even breathing on the glass surface might spoil the negative, which was probably twelve inches by fifteen inches, and so extremely tricky to handle. After exposure, the developing solution had to be poured over the plate. If the negative had survived thus far it had to be varnished to protect the chemical surface. This involved heating the plate and once again pouring liquid over it, with the risk that the varnish might crack the collodion surface. Mrs. Cameron preferred to print her negatives on silver chloride sensitised paper rather than the more popular Albumen paper, which was soaked in white of egg before being sensitised, and was claimed to give better definition. She sensitised the papers herself—child’s play compared to the preparation of the negative” (11). “For her long exposures Mrs. Cameron used daylight but to much more dramatic effect than her contemporaries. She disapproved of retouching and was not even prepared to dot out spots on the print” (11). Like Fry, Powell describes the ways in which the technological effects on the image production actually “enhance” many of Cameron’s images: “The characteristic out of focus effect is probably the result of using a lens of long focal length, which was necessary to cover the area of the plate. She would have worked with a wide open aperture at a distance of a few feet from her sitter, so there was very little depth of focus and increasing loss of definition in the outer areas of the photography. While this

could enhance the picture, there was little that Mrs. Cameron could do to prevent it, with her equipment and approach. Sitters would have to maintain their pose for three to seven minutes” (*VP* 12).

⁹⁷ *VP*, 26.

⁹⁸ *VP*, 27.

⁹⁹ Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 50, Cameron, Mrs. VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS.

¹⁰⁰ The full text of the letter follows below:

“My dear Woolf,

I agree that collotype is ruled out for the Cameron photo reproductions, the range of tone being far too great. There remain photogravure + half-tone. The former would be pretty in itself but would not give the same effect as the originals. I think you must stick to half-tone. The samples of half-tones you have sent me are very good, but the blockmasters have retouched parts, notably the highlights on the nose. It is, as you probably know, always a fight to induce process workers to leave the photographs alone, + they will very likely tell you, if you ask them, that there is no “handwork” on these reproductions. But there certainly is + it is just that that has destroyed the things. Supposing you do succeed in stopping the “handwork”, you will still be up against the difficulty of the immense range of tone in the originals; I mean by that the unusual difference in density of tone between the darkest parts + the lightest. The only half-tone process that can compete in that respect with real photographic print is the one we adopted some time ago for the Burlington Magazine plates. It is sufficiently [? Two words illegible to me] to merit an explanation.

An ordinary half-tone is composed of dots of ink with clear paper in between, (like this [then he has drawn a series of dash like dots in a circular grouping]). The new “double-tone” process is the same, only that a very stick, slow drying ink is used, with the result that as the paper bearing the impression lies drying, the parts where the dots are very dense become denser still because each dot spreads or clogs up with its neighbours. These parts when half dry look (under a glass) like this [drawing of similar circular shape but with little stars (round asterisk-like marks) instead of dashes]. And when quite dry all the dots have fused into a single area of ink. Thus the greatest possible density of tone is attained. As far as I can see without a glass your prints are not in “double-tone”.

The process is very little used in this country + is difficult to manage. The ink is, or recently was, difficult to obtain. The “Burlington” blockmakers, people called Reiach, have the ink + know the process well. So I suggest you call at the Burlington Mag. Office + speak to our secretary, Mr. F. Woolen, who knows much more than I do about process work. Take a photo + a print with you. The address is 17, Old Burlington St. Tell Mr. Woolen that Roger + I will be obliged if he will help in the matter. I have just remember that we once reproduced some of Mrs. Cameron’s photos in the Burlington. But that was before the double-tone process was adopted. And I further remember that we had to have the blocks remade because the process people had retouched them!

The only other plan would be to make actual photographic prints of the originals. This is of course expensive but there is a firm who do them surprisingly cheaply. Mr. Woolen will give you the address. Tell him it is the firm who did Browne's Van Eyck for the Burlington. If an expensive limited edition is your idea, then this is worth consideration. If these plans fail you will get quite a good result by ordinary half-tone, without handwork. They are lovely photographs + I am glad you are reproducing them." (Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 50, Cameron, Mrs. VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS)

¹⁰¹ Following Tatlock's advice, Leonard wrote to Messrs Herbert Reich Ltd (located in Hammersmith) the following letter:

"Dear Sirs,

We have been recommended to you by The Burlington Magazine with regard to the following. We are thinking of publishing a limited edition, Royal 4to, of reproductions of Mrs. Cameron's photographs, probably 24 plates, with two short introductions of about 6000 words in all. We wish the reproductions to be half-tone blocks, as near as possible facsimiles of the photographs, and therefore not touched up. The maximum size of blocks should be 9½" x 7½". We are sending you one of the photographs and should be much obliged if you would make us a specimen block and let us see proofs printed in brown ink on toned art paper (for which of course we would bear cost). We should also be obliged if you could let us have an approximate estimate for

(1) Making 24 blocks as above

(2) Printing alternatively 500, 750, and 1000 copies in brown ink on toned art paper

(3) Printing title page and introductions of about 6000 words in 14 pt. Caslon Old Face type on imitation hand-made paper Royal 4to alternatively 500, 750, and 1000 copies

(4) Binding per 100 in grey Michallet paper over boards with canvas back

Would it be possible, if you undertook the work, to complete it by October?"

(Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 50, Cameron, Mrs. VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS)

Leonard also writes to an individual photographer recommended to him in the course of his investigations; in a letter to Sidney W. Newberry, Photographer, he writes:

"We have been recommended to you by Mr. Woolen of The Burlington Magazine with regard to the following: We are intending to publish a book of reproductions of photographs by Mrs. Cameron (taken about 1860). We understand that you made a reproduction of a picture by photography for The Burlington Magazine and think that this may be the best method for us to employ. We should, therefore, be obliged if you would give us an approximate estimate of the price of reproduction by this process. The book would consist of 24 photographs, maximum size 9 ½" x 7 ½". Most of the photographs are large ones and the bulk of them will need reducing. Please estimate for 500, 750 and 1000 alternatively." Newbury responds that it would be much to great an undertaking for himself and that it would be too expensive to consider as an option. Thus, finally Leonard accepts the estimate of Herbert Reich LTD, although his letter to this firm still indicates his extreme desire for the quality of each print:

“We have much pleasure in accepting your estimate of August 9th. For the above (provisionally for 500 copies, though we may increase the number if sheets are taken by an American publisher), and subject to the following: We understand from your estimate that you propose to print four blocks at once. It is very important that every print must be perfect and you must, therefore, be prepared to scrap any number of pulls which are not perfect. Can you guarantee perfect pulls – at least as good as the specimen shown to us if you print for blocks to the forme? We should prefer to pay an additional sum rather than that there should be any risk of each print not being perfect.

We enclose copy for the text (except for the list of illustrations which we will send you in a day or two). The preliminary matter, half title and title page should be modelled [sic] as far as possible on the style of THE SAMPLER OF CASTILE, a copy of which we send you. Please let us know the number of pages which you estimate it will make.

We should be obliged if you would get on with the block making immediately; we must see good proofs of all the blocks before we pass them. Please also give us a date (a) for completion of blocks (b) for proofs of text (c) for delivery of sheets to the binders, and note that we wish to have seven sets of proofs of the text.

We approve the paper proposed by you (Graphic Creamy Art and Spalding Antique De Luxe). We shall also require a jacket printed for which we will send you copy later.”

(Hogarth Press Business Archive, University of Reading, Folder Hogarth Press 50, Cameron, Mrs. VICTORIAN PHOTOGRAPHS)

¹⁰² U of Sussex, SxMs18 Monks House Papers Letters III: Virginia Woolf, Farrell-Lubbock labeled box 72, Folder Fry, Roger.

CODA

In a panel entitled “New Directions in Modernist Studies” delivered at the MLA Conference in December 2008, hordes of eager graduate students, including myself, and many other listeners gathered to hear a range of eminent experts predict where the field is headed. One of the speakers, Christanne Miller, warned against a “transnationalism” that risks losing the specifics of particular contexts and urged for what she called “socio-historical close-reading.” Another speaker, Jahan Ramazani, warned against the twinned perils of being “vacantly global” on the one hand or “overly local” on the other. While I have defined the scope of my project as “Transatlantic” (rather than transnational), I have struggled to avoid these pitfalls and to maintain a rigorous attention to the specific historical cultures of print and of circulation that I examine while also gleaning broader conclusions about “modernism” as a field and as a transatlantic phenomenon. I have found that my interests in the details of modernist forms and in their publication contexts have trained my attention on the specifics of particular contexts. Yet while I feel that I have successfully combined detailed archival and contextual material with close attention to the formal techniques of modernism, I have often struggled to articulate fully the broader significance of each local claim. In other words, I have found myself more on the side of “overly local” in my fierce determination as a formally and historically inclined reader not to stray into the terrain of “vacantly global.” My final chapter was in part conceived of to force me to address broader concerns by moving away from specific authors and more toward the agents of production and dissemination; its title “Publishing

Modernism” announces its interests in a broader assessment of the field. While I feel that this chapter has pushed my work in this important direction, I also found myself unwilling to fully abandon the peculiarities of each publishing house and its specific location in the marketplace. Thus, it is less a broad story of “Transatlantic Modernism” and more a focused history of two different versions of modernism operating in specific ways on different sides of the Atlantic.

When asked (in a mock job interview) why I chose to invoke transatlantic in my title, my first response was “Why not?” and my second was something like “well, because my authors lived transatlantic lives (at least James and Eliot did) and their texts did circulate on both sides of the ocean.” As I’ve thought more about the topic, I have come to realize that my understanding of modernism as transatlantic is bound up with my arguments about modernists’ engagement in a larger world of print which was itself very much a transatlantic network. Even when the particular experiments that I discuss engaged with very specific national print contexts—i.e. James’s citation of the British illustrated weekly, *Black and White Magazine*, or Hogarth’s leveraging of the cultural prestige and resources of their friends in the Bloomsbury group to market and produce their editions—I understand these specific sites as participating in traditions and conventions of more broadly defined cultures of print. When negotiating one particular forum or market, modernist authors, publishers, and readers were always bringing with them their own ideas about circulation, about genre, about expectations, about mass readership, about innovations in book design and in advertising, about periodical formats, ideas which were not bound by national borders, but were rather constructed through a larger personal and cultural experience of the literary marketplace and of its printed

forms. My work on the telegram has become emblematic for the ways in which I conceive of the modernist authors and publishers as negotiating a vast network that sprawls the ocean and yet is also grounded in particular sites and histories of transmission (i.e. the local London post-office of James's caged telegraphist). In revising this project into a book manuscript, I hope to clarify further my relationship to the emergent field of transatlantic studies and to the "transnational turn" within modernist studies as outlined by Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz in their recent survey article, "The New Modernism Studies."¹ One way in which I could more fully articulate the transatlantic aspect of my argument would be to write an introductory chapter that more fully engages with the longer history of print culture in both America and England. This addition might prove particularly useful in clarifying my own relationship to critical work on print innovations throughout the nineteenth-century and my arguments about modernism's relationship to cultures of print and generic traditions inherited from that earlier period. By further developing my arguments about modernism's link to the nineteenth century, I would also be able to further define what makes modernism uniquely relevant to my arguments about literary experiments in print culture and what is uniquely "modern" and about my chosen period of 1880-1945. An expanded and backward-looking introduction would enable me to see what can be gained by extending my scope across periods as well as across national boundaries and might help me break further out from the "overly local" particulars of each chapter.²

Finally, over the course of developing my project into this dissertation I have struggled with the placement of genre in my project. It has gone in and out of various possible titles for the project as a whole—in this version it has been elided in favor of

form largely because of the unfavorable responses and expectations that the word “genre” seems to elicit from many readers. At my oral examinations, I was asked why not use “technologies of form” rather than the freighted term “genre”—and I responded (as I would still respond) that genre conveys the sense of expectations (on the part of readers, authors, and publishers) and that those expectations are a central part of what drives my work. As I continue to revise and rethink the key terms for this project, I would like to further account for the importance of genre and of criticism surrounding genres. In my treatment of genres I would like to echo June Howard’s flexible categorization of genres—for Howard, “genres are not static entities or even stable structures but distinctive concatenations of aesthetic imperatives and formal choices that weave, dynamically and unevenly, through literary texts.”³ In my own work, I would like to clarify further my understanding of genres and how the function in the literary forms and in the extra-literary forms (i.e. print cultural forms through which texts circulate) that I study. Ultimately, a more nuanced vocabulary for describing the genres and generic histories of both literary forms and printed ones will allow me to refine my arguments about the specific ways in which modernist authors and publishers experimented in print culture and about the ways readers might have received the material forms of modernism.

¹Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz, "The New Modernism Studies," *PMLA*, 123.3 (May 2008).

² Cassandra Laity in her "Editor's Introduction: Beyond Baudelaire, Decadent Aestheticism and Modernity" (*Modernism/Modernity*, 5.3, (September 2008), 427-430) has recently argued for the usefulness and current lack of such "cross-over research" (427).

³ June Howard, *Form and History in American Literary Naturalism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), x.

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